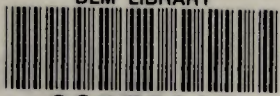


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Bureau of Land Management

Colorado State Office
Colorado

October 1991



WILDERNESS STUDY REPORT

Appendix I.

Instant Wilderness Study Areas

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Appendix I - INSTANT WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

<u>AREA</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
High Mesa Grassland Research Natural Area CO - ISA- 001	1
North Sand Hills Natural Area CO - ISA -002	21
Needle Rock Natural Area CO - ISA-003	45
Rare Lizard and Snake Natural Area CO - ISA-004	67
Powderhorn Primitive Area CO - ISA-005	91

BLM:

HIGH MESA GRASSLAND

INSTANT WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

FEBRUARY 1980



COLORADO
STATE
OFFICE

WILDERNESS REPORT

High Mesa Grassland

Instant Study Area

Bureau of Land Management
Department of the Interior

February 1, 1980

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
Recommendation	2
Maps	
Map 1 - Regional Location	
Map 2 - Study Area Boundary/Land Status	
Map 3 - Roads/Imprints of Man	
Statistical Summary	3
Background Information	4
Public Participation	5
Photographs	
Appendices	
Wilderness Summary Sheet	i
Wilderness Intensive Inventory	ii

INTRODUCTION

Section 603 (a) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) provides, in part:

That the Secretary of the Interior shall report to the President by July 1, 1980, his recommendations on those areas which the Secretary has prior to November 1, 1975, formally identified as natural or primitive areas.

There were eleven primitive areas and 44 natural areas throughout the West for which this accelerated wilderness review is required. These areas are referred to as wilderness "instant study areas" (ISA's).

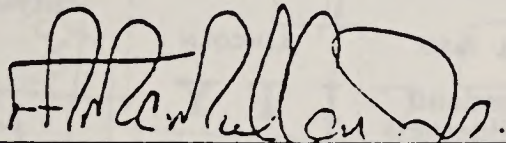
In response to Section 603 (a) of FLMPA, the Canon City District of the Bureau of Land Management inventoried the High Mesa Grassland Research Natural Area to determine if the area possessed wilderness characteristics. This report presents BLM's findings and recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

The High Mesa Grassland Research Natural Area and contiguous public lands were found not to possess wilderness characteristics as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964. Specifically, the area does not meet the size requirement, is not natural within the context of wilderness requirements, and does not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The results of the wilderness characteristics evaluation are presented in the appendix.

The social and economic impacts of this recommendation are insignificant, because the designation of the High Mesa Grassland as a Research Natural Area will not change as a result of this recommendation. The Area will continue to be managed on an interim basis pending completion of the land-use plan for all BLM administered lands in the Royal Gorge Resource Area. The interim management policies allow existing compatible uses to continue.

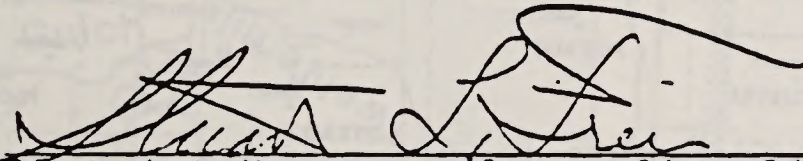
In summary, the High Mesa Grassland Instant Study Area and contiguous public lands were found not to possess wilderness characteristics and are not recommended for wilderness designation.



Area Manager, Royal Gorge Resource Area

12/26/79

Date

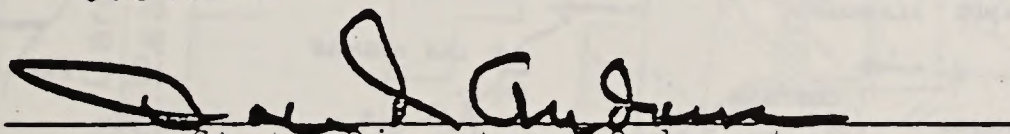


District Manager, Canon City District

ACTING

12/26/79

Date



State Director, Colorado

1/9/80

Date

Director, Bureau of Land Management

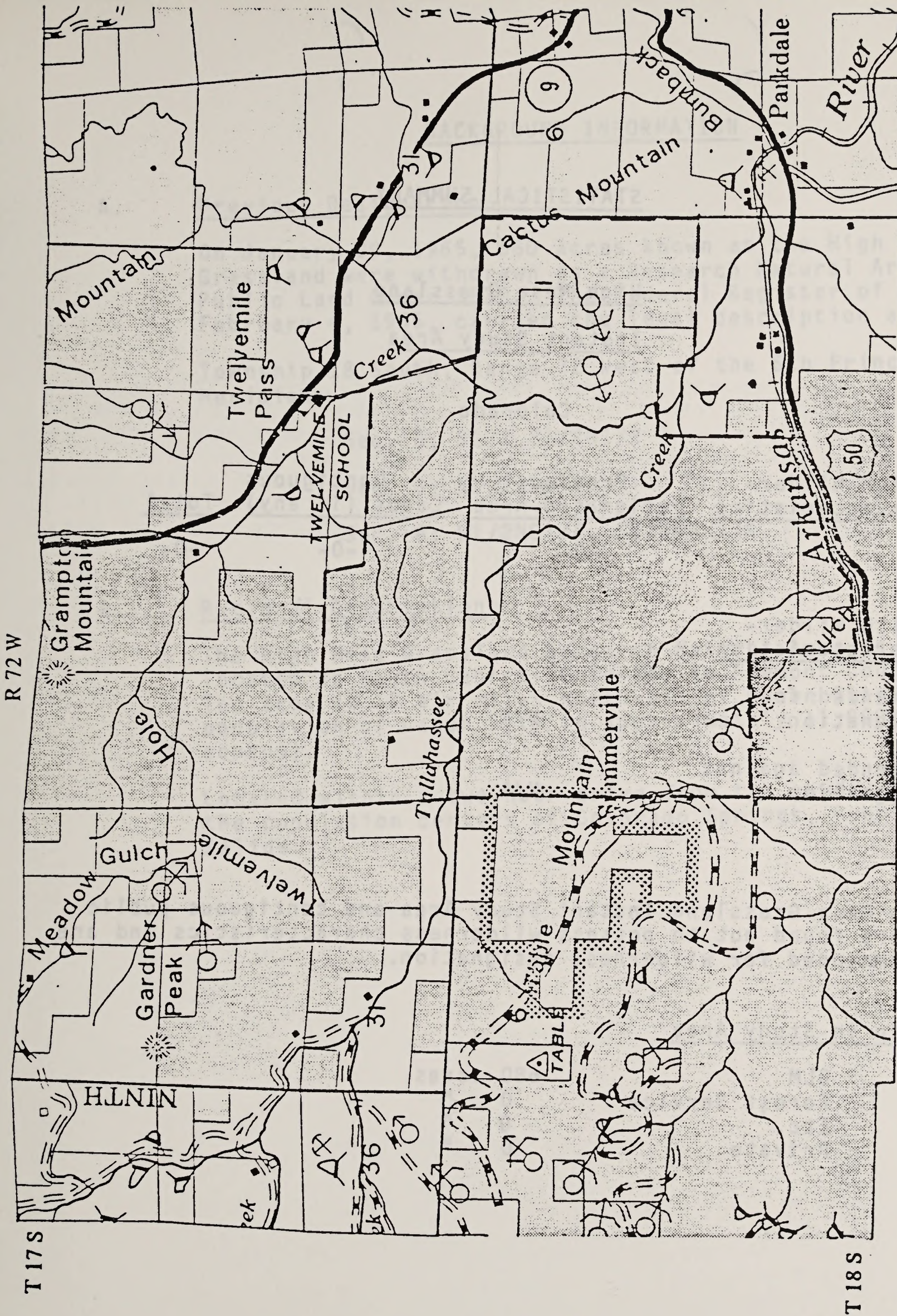
Date

COLORADO



January 1980

Location of High Mesa Instant Wilderness Study Area



Scale: 1 inch = 1 mile

- Roads
- - - Boundary of Instant Wilderness Study Area
- . - Lands Determined to Lack Wilderness Characteristics
- Public Lands
- Private Lands
- State Lands

January 1980

Map 2

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

High Mesa Grassland

Instant Study Area

Colorado

<u>Acres With Wilder-</u> <u>ness Characteristics</u>	<u>Previously</u> <u>Designated Area</u>	<u>Contiguous</u> <u>Lands (if any)</u>	<u>Total</u>
	-0-	-0-	-0-

Areas With Wilder-
ness Characteristics

Recommended for
Designation

N/A

Recommended against
Designation

N/A

Total

The High Mesa Grassland Instant Study Area and contiguous public lands were found not to possess wilderness characteristics and are not recommended for wilderness designation.

Ownership in Study Area

BLM	680	acres
Forest Service	0	"
Etc.	0	"
Private	0	"

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Previous Designation

On January 29, 1965, 680 acres known as the High Mesa Grassland were withdrawn as a Research Natural Area by Public Land Order 3530. The Federal Register of February 4, 1965, carried the legal description as:

Township 18 South, Range 72 West of the 6th Principal Meridian

Sec. 5; S1/2, S1/2N1/2

Sec. 6; N1/2SE1/4

Sec. 8; W1/2NE1/4, SE1/4NW1/4

B. Regional Description

The High Mesa Grassland Research Natural Area is located in south central Colorado in Fremont County. The area is 13 air miles northwest of Canon City. The population of Canon City is approximately 11,000 (1970 census).

Located within a two-hour drive from the study area are the population centers of Colorado Springs, Pueblo and Salida.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A Federal Register notice, published August 29, 1979 (Vol. 44, No. 169), announced the start of a thirty-day comment period on the recommendation for the High Mesa Grassland Instant Study Area. In conjunction with the Federal Register notice, the Canon City District issued a NEWS RELEASE announcing this 30-day public comment period which was open till September 28, 1979. No comments were received during this public comment period regarding the High Mesa Grassland ISA recommendation.

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

WILDERNESS INVENTORY
WILDERNESS SUMMARY SHEET

I. LOCATION

Inventory Unit No.: CO-050-009

Area Name: HIGH MESA GRASSLAND RESEARCH NATURAL AREA

District: Canon City State: Colorado

II. SUMMARY

A. Results of wilderness characteristics analysis.

- | | | |
|--|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Does the area appear to be natural? | <u> </u> yes | <u>X</u> no |
| 2. Does the area or island offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type recreation? | <u> </u> yes | <u>X</u> no |
| 3. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? | <u> </u> yes | <u>X</u> no |
| 4. Does the area or island have supplemental values? | <u>X</u> yes | <u> </u> no |

III. RECOMMENDATION

Check one:

- Area or island should be approved as a WSA.
- XArea or island does not qualify for wilderness study.
- A portion of the area(s) or island(s) should be approved as a WSA for further study and reported to the President. The restrictions imposed by Section 603 will no longer apply (reference to map) on the remainder of the area.

IV. APPROVAL

A. Area Manager: Jack D. Albright

Date: 12-10-79

B. District Manager: Melvin D. Clausen

Date: 12-10-79

C. State Director: W. J. Anderson

Date: 1/9/80

WILDERNESS INTENSIVE INVENTORY

UNIT NO. 009

NAME OF AREA: High Mesa Grassland
Instant Study Area

1. SIZE:

Acreage Breakdown:

BLM 680 acres

PRIVATE 0 acres

STATE 0 acres

A. Location

The High Mesa Grassland Instant Study Area or Sommerville Table (local name) is located 13 air miles northwest of Canon City, or 33 road miles using U.S. Highway 50, Colorado State Highway 9 and unsurfaced roads to reach the area.

B. Initial Inventory Unit Boundaries

The High Mesa Grassland Instant Study Area contains 680 acres of Public Land. The legal description taken from the Federal Register is given as:

Township 18 South, Range 72 west, 6th Principal Meridian

Sec 5; S $\frac{1}{2}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$

Sec 6; N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$

Sec 8; W $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$

C. Intensive Inventory Unit Boundaries

The High Mesa Grassland (Unit No. CO-050-009) is adjacent to two other initial inventory units, numbers CO-050-009A and CO-050-009B. The mesa is separated from the latter unit by a road. The legal description, as given in the Federal Register, constitutes the unit boundary between the Mesa and unit number CO-050-009A. The Situation Evaluation for CO-050-009B is included in the Appendix following this report.

Unit Number CO-050-009A was dropped from further wilderness consideration during the initial inventory because it obviously lacked naturalness. The Situation Evaluation for this unit records several ways, check dams, stock watering tanks, claim stakes for numerous uranium mines and mining exploration work. The accumulative affect of these "Works of Man" affects the apparent naturalness of the area. For more specifics, see the Situation Evaluation for CO-050-009A in the Appendix.

D. Ownership

Unit boundaries and an explanation of adjacent Public Lands was described in Section 'B' and 'C'. In addition to these lands this unit is bordered on the north by private lands.

1. Leases - This unit is covered by an active grazing lease.
2. Easements - None known.
3. Mining Claims - The area is intensively covered by mining claims.
4. Other Information - The unit has been withdrawn from active mining to protect the area for scientific study (designated Research Natural Areas).

E. Summary of Size Criteria

The High Mesa Grassland Research Natural Area became a Wilderness Instant Study Area when Congress passed the Federal Land Policy and Management Act in 1976.

During the initial inventory of the wilderness review this area became study area CO-050-009. The unit is located 13 air miles northwest from Canon City. It is principally a mesa which contains 680 acres of Public Land. It is contiguous with two other study units which were dropped from further wilderness consideration because of a lack of naturalness.

SIGNATURE _____

Date _____

2. NATURALNESS:

A. Topography and Vegetation

The block mountain structure of the mesa varies in altitude from 8,500 feet to 9,062 feet. The slope varies throughout the rolling plateau while the surface is generally elevated to the 8,750 foot contour line. The terrain is rolling to steep with a southeasterly aspect.

The vegetation patterns include four community types: Grassland, Oakbrush, Conifer and Mountain shrub. The Grassland is predominantly centered atop the mesa with oakbrush occurring along the edges. Mountain shrub is interdispersed throughout the area with conifer species on the northern slopes. Seventeen native species of grass have been identified within the withdrawal boundary.

B. Imprints of Man

The unit contains several imprints of man. In the western corner an earth dam encatchment has been constructed. The dam disrupts the natural contour of the area.

Numerous mining claims are located within the unit. Each claim is stacked with a 4x4 post and a metal locator tag. While they constitute a minor imprint of man, they can be seen throughout the unit because of the flat mesa top.

The unit is bisected by a road which was constructed by equipment and is actively maintained.

C. Summary of Naturalness Criteria

This unit is principally the top of a mesa with some of the side slopes included. Covered by four plant community types, it was designated a Research Natural Area because it contains at least 17 native grasses.

The naturalness of the unit has been altered due to minor and major works of man. These are a constructed road, an earth dam, and mining claim stakes.

3. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION ANALYSIS:

A. Solitude

Because the unit is only 680 acres and a mesa, the area does not offer opportunities for solitude. Visitors to the area would not be able to conceal themselves through natural means from one another. The larger vegetation types which might screen visitors are limited in quantity. Except for side slopes, there is little opportunity for natural contours to conceal visitors. The greatest percentage of the 680 acres is contained on the flat mesa top.

Summary: Does the area have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

YES

NO

SIGNATURE _____

Date _____

B. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The topography which limits opportunities for solitude also limits opportunities for unconfined recreation. The mesa top is not conducive to hiking because it does not offer a challenge nor a large area to cover.

Certain recreation activities are also not allowed because of the Research Natural Area designation. Collecting plant species, for example, is prohibited in order to protect the research potential of the area.

Summary: Does the area have outstanding opportunities for a primitive or unconfined type of recreation?

YES

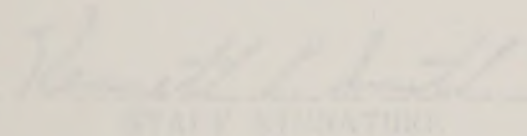
NO

SIGNATURE _____

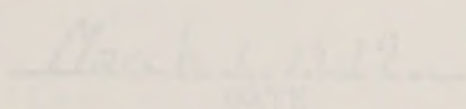
Date _____

4. SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES

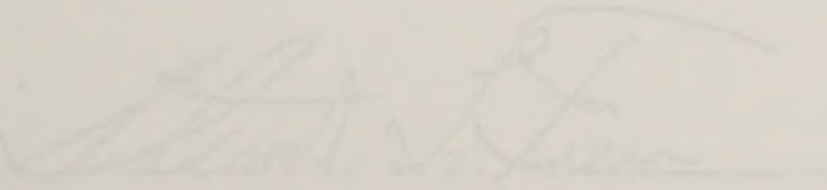
The High Mesa Grassland was designated a Research Natural Area because of the native grasses and other plant communities located throughout the unit.




DIRECTOR



DATE



ACTING



DATE

WILDERNESS INVENTORY
SITUATION EVALUATION

I. WILDERNESS UNIT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER CO-050-009a

II. UNIT ANALYSIS

Ownership - all lands within this area are owned by BLM, except for two patented mining claims which total approximately 400 acres and two public water reserve sites of about 120 acres total.

Size - 6223 acres.

Easements - none known.

Leases - the majority of the area is under grazing lease.

Mining Claims - since area 009a has very high uranium potential it is totally covered with unpatented mining claims.

Permanent Improvements - there are a few check dams and several "ways".

Existing-uses - grazing.

Human Activity - some mining exploration and a lot of claim staking.

Land Treatment - manipulations - some livestock water tanks.

General vegetation and Topographic features - primary vegetation is grass, pinyon and juniper. Topography is steep and rugged.

Contiguous lands - part of the west boundary adjoining Sommerville Table Natural area and the southern boundary adjoins the Arkansas River and Rt. 50.

III. UNIT EVALUATION

This area ~~does~~/does not have potential for wilderness.

EXPLANATION

Area 009B has many imprints of mans activity (such as check dams and "ways") and is not considered in a natural condition.

North Sand Hills
East of Study Area

IV. UNIT RECOMMENDATION

- ☐ A. Area or island (or groupings) is recommended for intensive wilderness inventory.
- ☒ B. Area or island (or groupings) is recommended as not qualifying for further inventory and should be dropped from the wilderness review process.

Kenneth L. Smith
STAFF SIGNATURE

March 1, 1979
DATE

V. APPROVAL

Charles R. Bean
ACTING

3/2/79

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Recommendation	2
Maps	
Map 1 - Regional Location	
Map 2 - Study Area Boundary/Land Status	
Map 3 - Roads/Imprints of Man	
Statistical Summary	3
Background Information	4
Public Participation	5
<u>North Sand Hills</u>	
Photographs	
<u>Instant Study Area</u>	
Appendices	
Wilderness Summary Sheet	6
Wilderness Intensive Inventory	11

Bureau of Land Management
Department of the Interior

February 1, 1980

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
Recommendation	2
Maps	
Map 1 - Regional Location	
Map 2 - Study Area Boundary/Land Status	
Map 3 - Roads/Imprints of Man	
Statistical Summary	3
Background Information	4
Public Participation	5
Photographs	
Appendices	
Wilderness Summary Sheet	i
Wilderness Intensive Inventory	ii

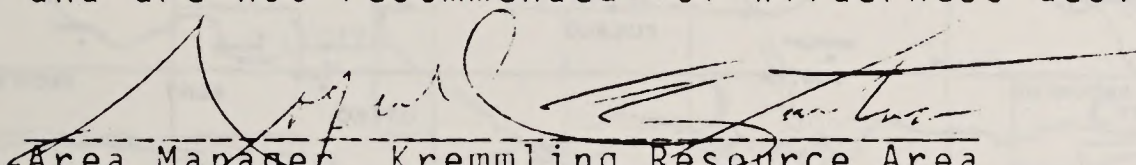
RECOMMENDATION

The North Sand Hills Instant Study Area and contiguous public lands were found not to possess wilderness characteristics as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964. Specifically, the area does not meet the size requirement, is not natural within the context of wilderness requirements, and does not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The results of the wilderness characteristics evaluation are presented in the appendix.

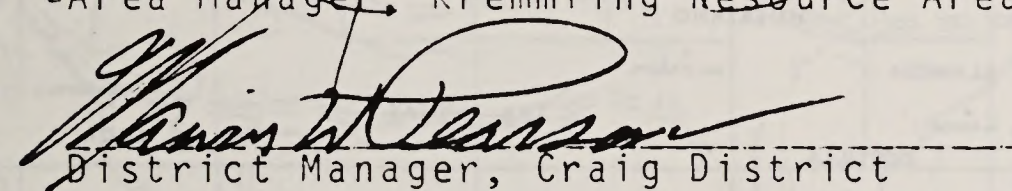
The social and economic impacts of this recommendation are insignificant.

The designation of the North Sand Hills as a Natural Area will not change as a result of this recommendation. The Area will continue to be managed on an interim basis pending completion of the land-use plan for all BLM administered lands in the North Park Area. The interim management policies allow existing compatible uses to continue.

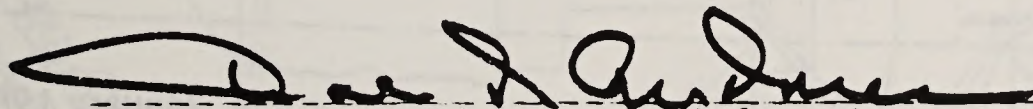
In summary, the North Sand Hills Instant Study Area and contiguous public lands were found not to possess wilderness characteristics and are not recommended for wilderness designation.


Area Manager, Kremmling Resource Area

12/28/79
Date


District Manager, Craig District

1/3/80
Date

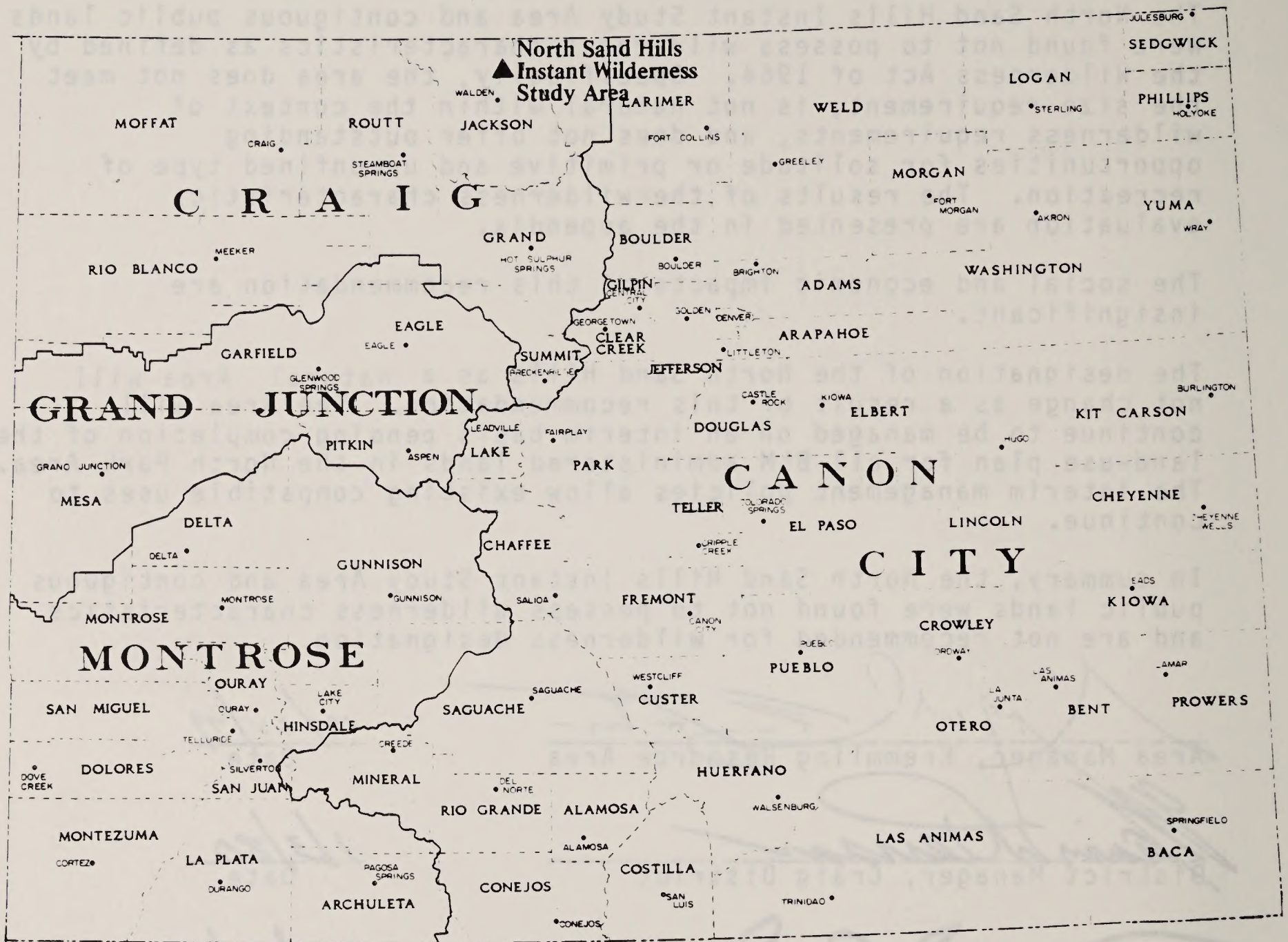

State Director, Colorado

1/9/80
Date

Director, Bureau of Land Management

Date

COLORADO



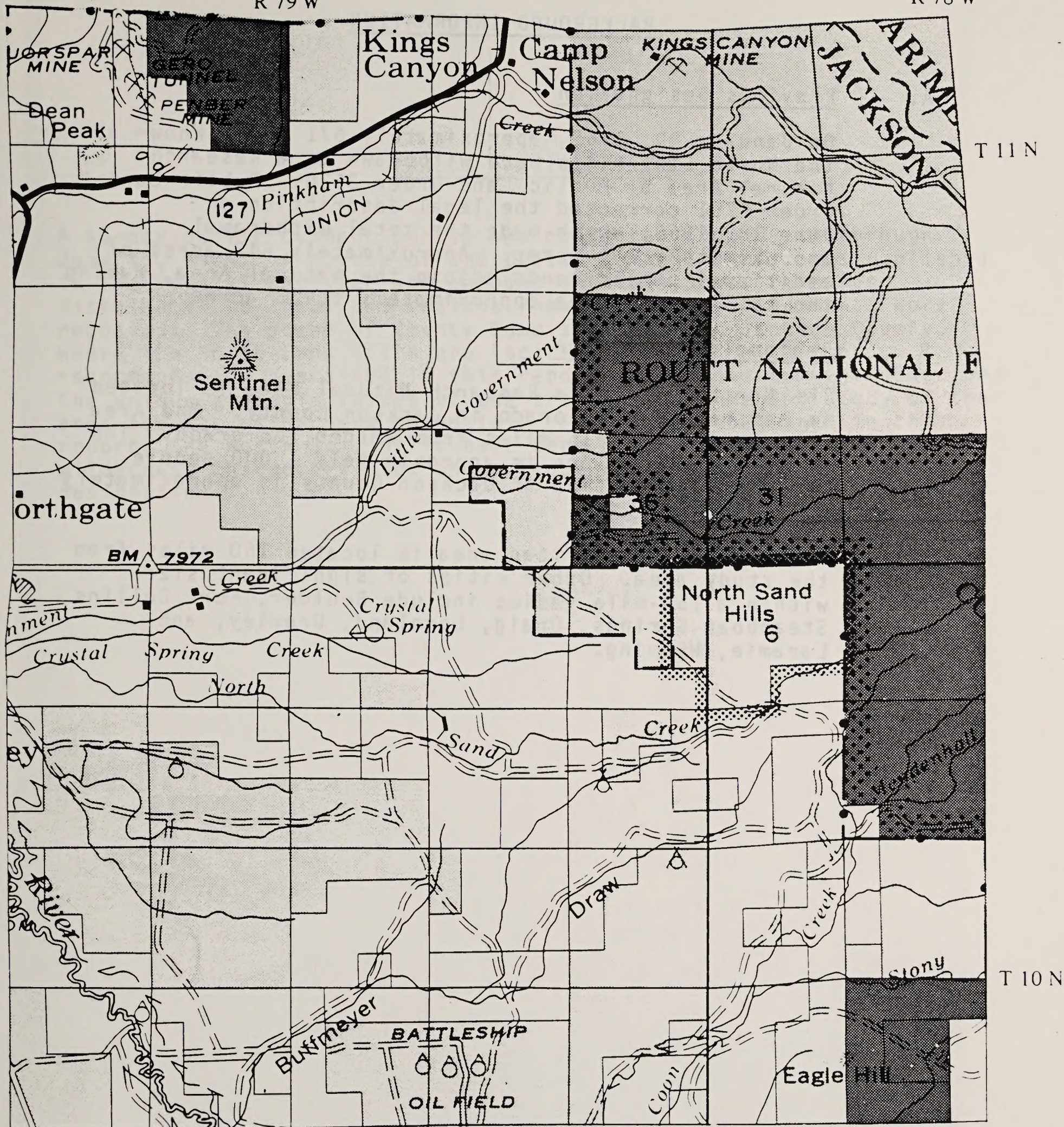
January 1980

Location of North Sand Hills Instant Wilderness Study Area

Map 1

R 79 W

R 78 W



..... Boundary of Instant Wilderness Study Area

--- Lands Determined to Lack Wilderness Characteristics

Public Lands

State Lands

National Forest Lands

Private Lands

Scale: 1 inch = 1 mile

January 1980

Map 2

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Previous Designation

On January 29, 1965, approximately 671 acres known as the North Sand Hills were withdrawn as a Research Natural Area by Public Land Order 3530. Public Land Order 3701 corrected the legal description on June 18, 1965, which made the total withdrawal approximately 791 acres. Approximately 642 acres of additional public lands adjoin the Natural Area, making the total study area approximately 1,433 acres.

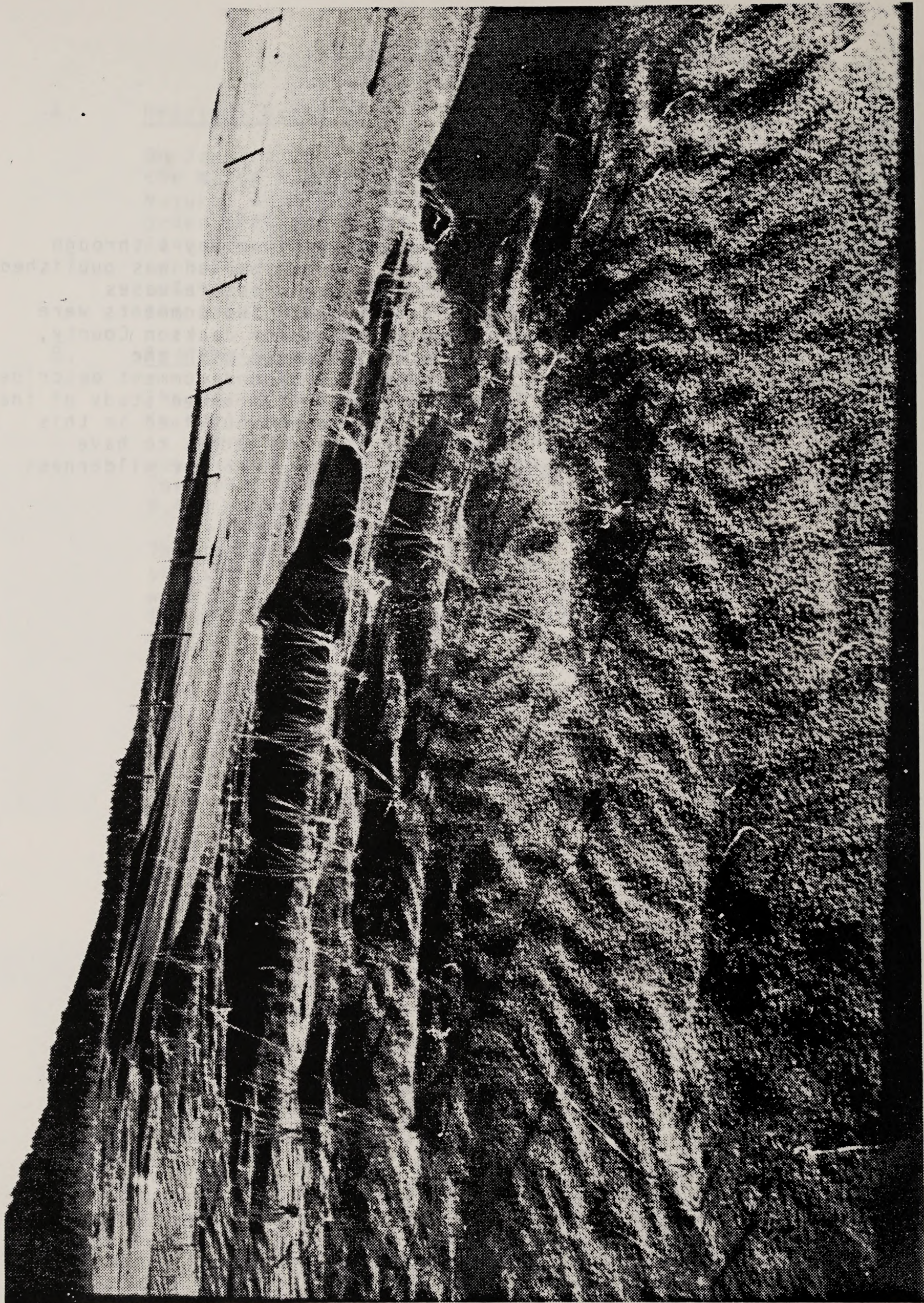
B. Regional Description

The North Sand Hills Research Natural Area is located in northwestern Colorado in Jackson County. The Area is approximately 15 miles from Walden, Colorado. The population of Walden is approximately 1,000 people. The total population of Jackson County is approximately 2,400 people.

The Denver metropolitan area is located 160 miles from the study area. Other cities of significant size within a 150-mile radius include Boulder, Fort Collins, Steamboat Springs, Craig, Loveland, Greeley, and Laramie, Wyoming.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A 45-day public comment period was conducted from May 1 through June 15, 1979. A notice of the public comment period was published in the Federal Register and announced through press releases distributed to local and regional newspapers. Two comments were received. The Board of County Commissioners for Jackson County, where the North Sand Hills are located concurred with the recommendation contained in this report. A second comment described the unique geologic values of the area and recommended study of the area for its wilderness potential. For reasons outlined in this report, the North Sand Hills have been determined not to have wilderness characteristics and are not recommended for wilderness designation.









WILDERNESS INVENTORY
WILDERNESS SUMMARY SHEET

I. LOCATION

Inventory Date No.: CO-010-106

Area Name: NORTH SARD HILLS NATURAL AREA

District: Craig

State: Colorado

II. SUMMARY

A. Results of wilderness characteristics analysis:

- | | | |
|--|------------|--------------------|
| 1. Does the area appear to be natural? | <u>yes</u> | <u>Y</u> <u>no</u> |
| 2. Does the area or island offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unimproved type recreation? | <u>yes</u> | <u>Y</u> <u>no</u> |
| 3. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? | <u>yes</u> | <u>Y</u> <u>no</u> |
| 4. Does the area or island have supplemental values? | <u>yes</u> | <u>Y</u> <u>no</u> |

APPENDICES

III. RECOMMENDATION

Check one:

- ☐ Area or island should be approved as a wilderness area.
- ☐ Area or island not eligible for wilderness study.
- ☐ A portion of the area or island should be approved as a wilderness area and the remainder should be removed from the list of areas for further study and reported to the President. The restrictions imposed by Section 663 will no longer apply (reference to map) on the remainder of the area.

IV. APPROVAL

A. Area Manager:

Date:

B. District Manager:

Date:

C. State Director:

Date:

WILDERNESS INVENTORY
WILDERNESS SUMMARY SHEET

I. LOCATION

Inventory Unit No.: CO-010-108

Area Name: NORTH SAND HILLS NATURAL AREA

District: Craig State: Colorado

II. SUMMARY

A. Results of wilderness characteristics analysis.

- | | | |
|--|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Does the area appear to be natural? | <u> </u> yes | <u>X</u> no |
| 2. Does the area or island offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type recreation? | <u> </u> yes | <u>X</u> no |
| 3. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? | <u> </u> yes | <u>X</u> no |
| 4. Does the area or island have supplemental values? | <u>X</u> yes | <u> </u> no |

III. RECOMMENDATION

Check one:

- Area or island should be approved as a WSA.
- X Area or island does not qualify for wilderness study.
- A portion of the area(s) or island(s) should be approved as a WSA for further study and reported to the President. The restrictions imposed by Section 603 will no longer apply (reference to map) on the remainder of the area.

IV. APPROVAL

A. Area Manager:

Date:

B. District Manager:

Date:

C. State Director:

Date:

WILDERNESS INTENSIVE INVENTORY

UNIT NO. CO-010-108

NAME OF AREA No. Sand Hills
Instant Study Area

Explain by a concise narrative the following essential wilderness characteristics (for guidance see text in the Wilderness Inventory Handbook):

1. SIZE Designated Natural Area - 791 acres
 Contiguous Public Lands - 642 acres

Narrative: Total 1,433 acres

The study area is approximately 1,433 acres. Roads within the area divide it into five different roadless units (see map 4). The roadless units within the study are approximately 650, 350, 220, 150, and 50 acres in size.

The northern portion of the area adjoins an isolated parcel of National Forest land. This parcel was not identified as having wilderness potential in RARE II.

The area also adjoins the Colorado State Forest. The State Forest is not managed as wilderness nor does the State intend to manage its adjoining lands under the concept of wilderness management as outlined in the Wilderness Act of 1964. Motorized vehicles are allowed on the adjoining State Forest lands.

- Summary: 1. Does the area have at least 5,000 acres of contiguous land and is it of sufficient size to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition?

YES NO (circle one)

2. Does the island have sufficient size to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition?

YES NO (circle one) N/A

SIGNATURE: Elvin Clapp
(Who did analysis and when)

Elvin Clapp, Recreation Specialist, Kremmling Resource Area

Vaughn Baker

Vaughn Baker, Wilderness Specialist, Craig District Office

DATE: 7/27/77

2. NATURALNESS

Narrative:

A 345-kv power line bisects the area (see map 5). The power line is visually present from many observation points within the North Sand Hills. Several construction fills and cuts and associated erosion follow the power line.

Approximately five miles of fence are found within the area or form the border (see map 5).

There are several roads and ways within the area.

Because of the uniqueness of the dunes; the North Sand Hills were designated as a Research Natural Area. The man-made structures discussed above impair the area's naturalness from a wilderness standpoint; however, the area does possess outstanding natural values. BLM will continue to manage the area as a Research Natural Area.

Summary: Does the area or island generally appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable?

YES

☒ NO

(circle one)

SIGNATURE:

Elvin ClappDATE: 7/27/79

Elvin Clapp, Recreation Specialist, Kremmling Resource Area

Vaughn Baker

Vaughn Baker, Wilderness Specialist, Craig District Office

3. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITY FOR SOLITUDE OR A PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION ANALYSIS

A. SOLITUDE

Narrative:

Size, configuration, vegetation, and topography were evaluated to determine the opportunities for solitude.

Size

The area is approximately 1,433 acres. The frequency of encountering other people in an area of this size would be substantial.

Configuration

The area is an elongated parcel of land. This configuration does not lend itself to finding areas of solitude because of continual exposure to activities within and adjacent to the area.

Vegetation

The North Sand Hills are dominated by sagebrush and rabbitbrush. This vegetation does not provide screening which would enhance opportunities for solitude.

Topography

The variation in topography is small which increases the probability of encountering others visiting the area or using adjacent lands. Someone walking across the dunes would be intermittently hidden within numerous small sand bowls. As the same individual came out of the bowls, he/she would be visible from 60 to 70% of the study area.

Summary: Does the area have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

YES ☒ NO (circle one)

SIGNATURE: Elvin Clapp

DATE: 4/27/77

Elvin Clapp, Recreation Specialist, Kremmling Resource Area

Vaughn Baker

Vaughn Baker, Wilderness Specialist, Craig District Office

B. PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION**Narrative:**

Historically, the majority of recreational use has been motorized use. Recreational activities include dispersed dune riding, camping, and picnicking.

Other recreational uses include environmental education, big game hunting of deer and elk, dispersed picnicking and camping (not associated with ORV's) and general sightseeing.

Due to the size and configuration of the area, the opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are limited and therefore not outstanding.

Summary: Does the area have outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?

YES ☒ NO (circle one)

SIGNATURE: Elvin Clapp **DATE:** 4/27/79
Elvin Clapp, Recreation Specialist, Kremmling Resource Area
Vaughn Baker
Vaughn Baker, Wilderness Specialist, Craig District Office

5. POSSIBILITY OF CERTAIN AREAS RETURNING TO A NATURAL CONDITION

Narrative:

The fences in the area could be economically removed and the area restored to a natural condition through hand labor and natural processes.

The ways would return to a natural condition through natural processes over a 10-15 year period.

The powerline could not be economically removed or relocated and therefore must be considered a permanent man-made facility which is substantially noticeable.

Summary: If the area or island were to become a wilderness area, could the imprint of man's work be reduced by either natural processes or by hand labor to a level judged to be substantially unnoticeable?

YES ☒ NO (circle one)

SIGNATURE:

Elvin ClappDATE: 4/27/79

Elvin Clapp, Recreation Specialist, Kremmling Resource Area

Vaughn Baker

Vaughn Baker, Wilderness Specialist, Craig District Office

4. SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES

Narrative:

Geologic

The Sand Hills represents an aeolian sand deposit which comprises one of the three active dune areas in Colorado. The morphology consists of two large, active dunes with small internal dunes migrating up the windward slopes.

Cultural

Several archaeological sites have been discovered which may represent a specialized aboriginal cultural exploitation of a distinct geographical unit. Several of the identified sites may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Summary: Does the area contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value?

☒ YES

NO (circle one)

SIGNATURE: Elvin Clapp DATE: 4/27/77
Elvin Clapp, Recreation Specialist, Kremmling Resource Area
Vaughn Baker
Vaughn Baker, Wilderness Specialist, Craig District Office

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WILDERNESS REPORT

Introduction

1

Recommendation

2

Maps

Map 1 - Regional Location

Map 2 - Study Area Boundary/Land Status

Map 3 - Roads

Needle Rock

Statistical Summary

3

Instant Study Area

Background Information

4

Public Participation

5

Photographs

Appendices

Wilderness Inventory Sheet

1

Wilderness Inventory Inventory

11

Montrose District, Colorado

Bureau of Land Management

Department of the Interior

February 1, 1980

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
Recommendation	2
Maps	
Map 1 - Regional Location	
Map 2 - Study Area Boundary/Land Status	
Map 3 - Roads	
Statistical Summary	3
Background Information	4
Public Participation	5
Photographs	
Appendices	
Wilderness Summary Sheet	i
Wilderness Intensive Inventory	ii

INTRODUCTION

Section 603 (a) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) provides in part:

That the Secretary of the Interior shall report to the President by July 1, 1980, his recommendations on those areas which the Secretary has prior to November 1, 1975, formally identified as natural or primitive areas.

There are eleven primitive areas and 44 natural areas on Bureau lands for which this accelerated wilderness review is required. These areas are referred to as wilderness "instant study areas" (ISA's).

The Montrose District of the Bureau of Land Management has inventoried Needle Rock Natural Area to determine if the area possesses wilderness characteristics, and if so, to make a recommendation as to the suitability or non-suitability of this area as wilderness to Congress. This report presents the Bureau's findings and recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Needle Rock Instant Study Area was not found to possess wilderness characteristics as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964. Specifically, the area does not meet the size requirement, is not natural within the context of wilderness requirements, and does not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The results of the wilderness characteristics evaluation are presented in the appendix.

The social and economic impacts of this recommendation are insignificant because the designation of the Needle Rock ISA as a Natural Area will not change as a result of this recommendation.

In summary, the Needle Rock Instant Study Area was not found to possess wilderness characteristics and is not recommended for wilderness designation.

Kimberly M. Jettner
Area Manager, Uncompahgre Resource Area

1-2-80
Date

Charles V. Jones
District Manager, Montrose District

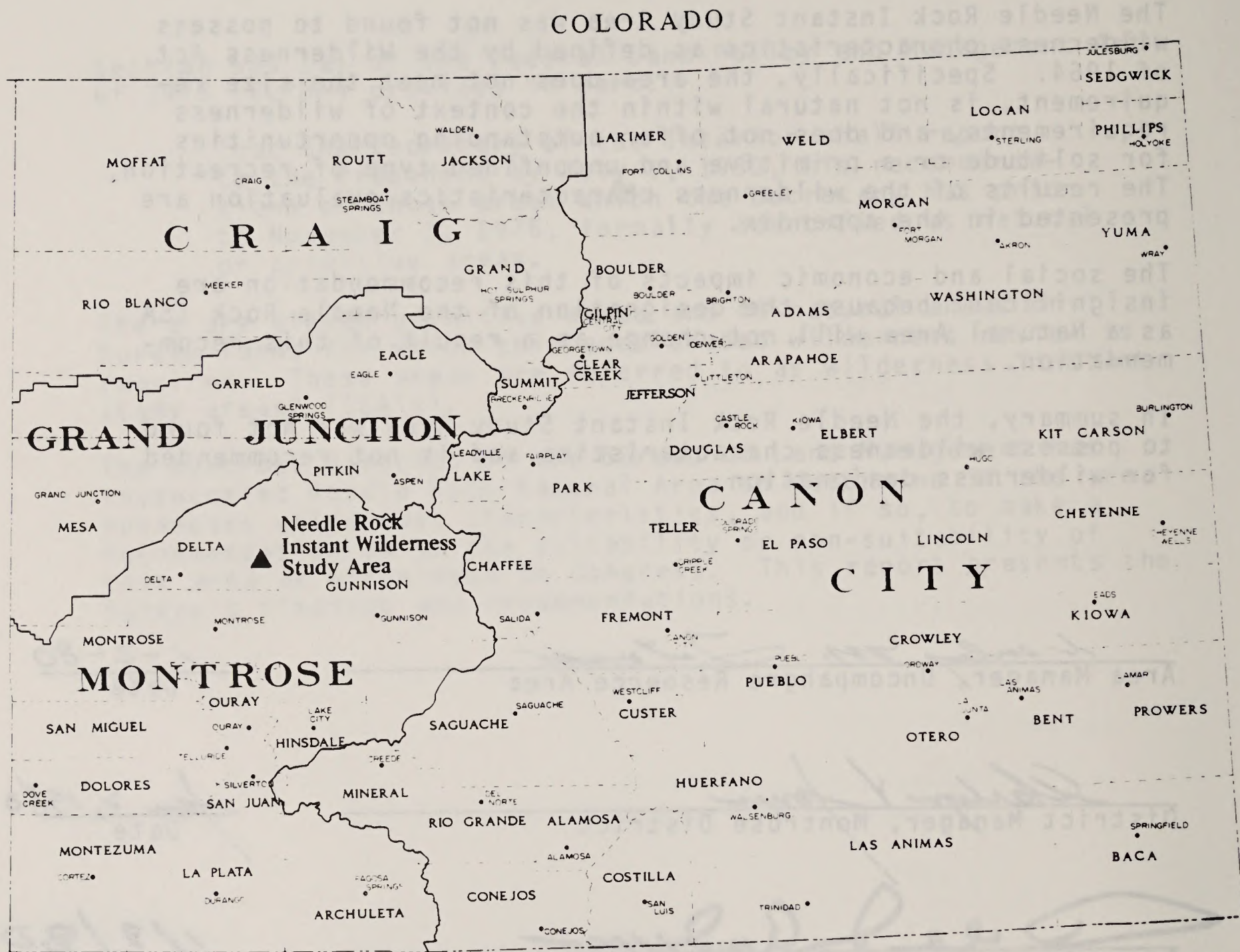
Jan 2, 1980
Date

Dee J. Anderson
State Director, Colorado

1/9/80
Date

Director, Bureau of Land Management

Date

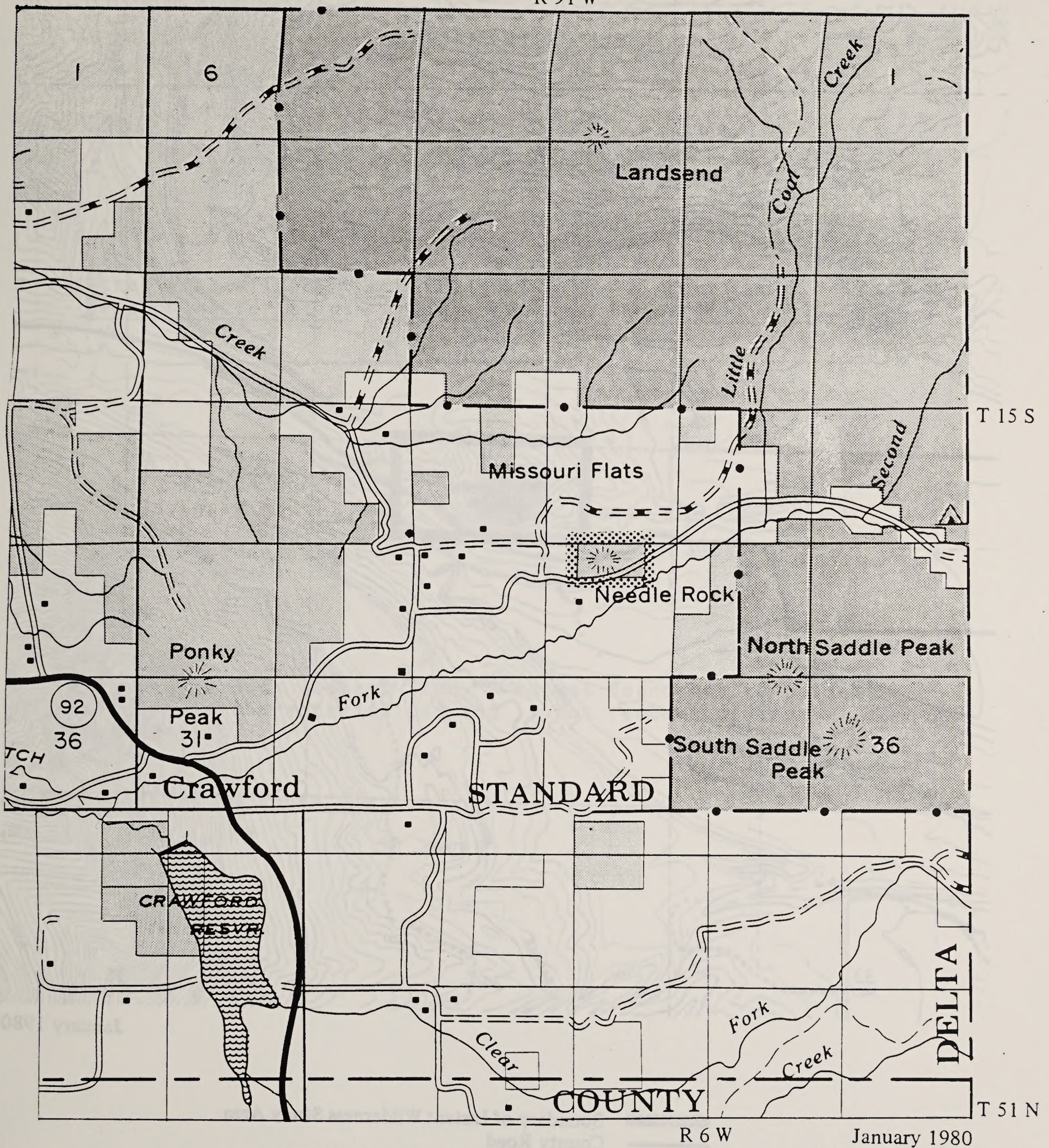


January 1980

Location of Needle Rock Instant Wilderness Study Area

Map 1

R 91 W

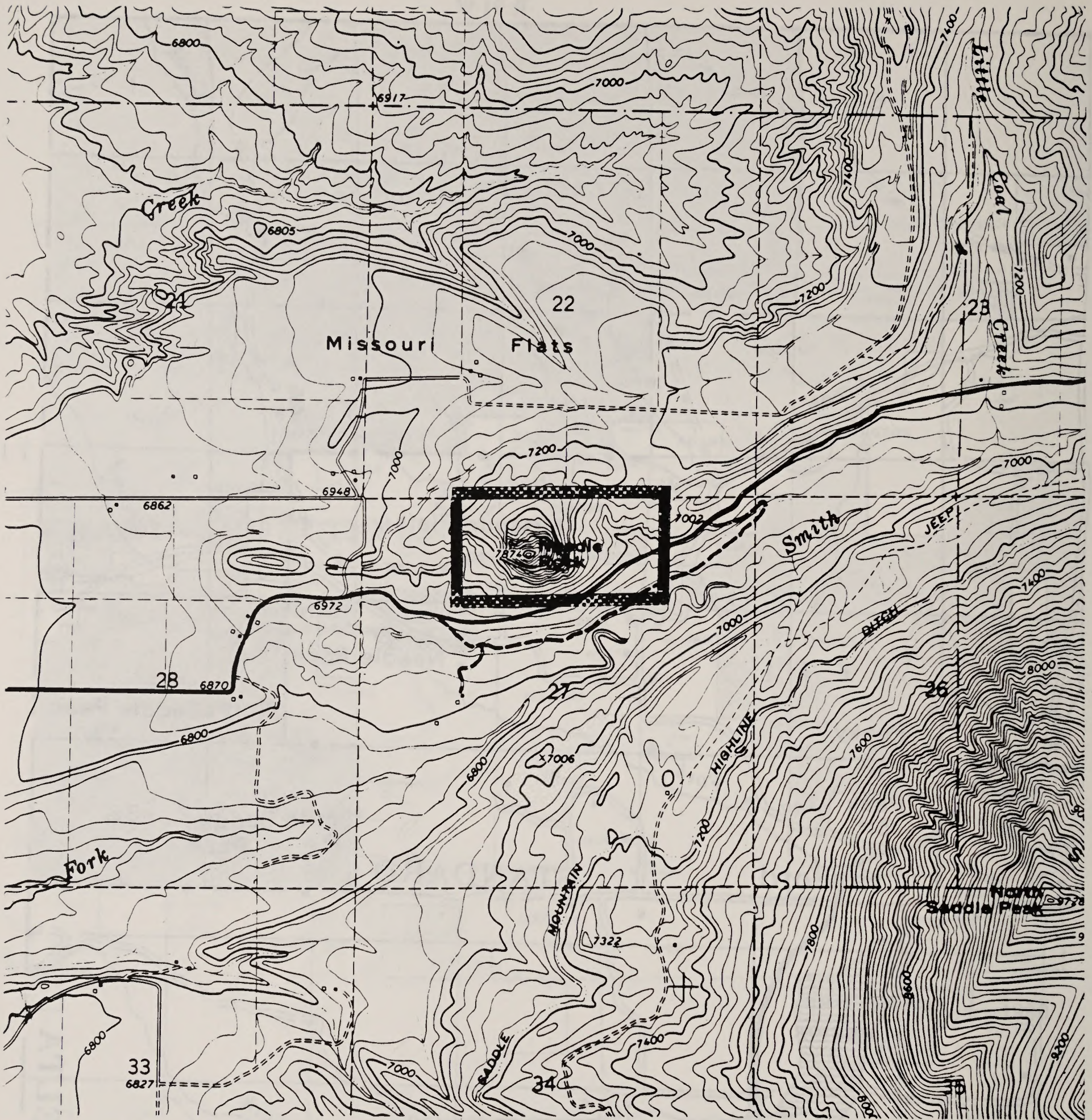


T 15 S

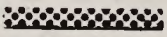
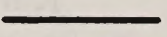
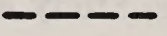
T 51 N

R 6 W

January 1980



January 1980

-  Boundary of Instant Wilderness Study Area
-  County Road
-  Private Road
- Scale - 1:24,000

Map 3

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

Needle Rock

Instant Study Area

Colorado

<u>Acres With Wilder- ness Characteristics</u>	<u>Previously Designated Area</u>	<u>Contiguous Lands (if any)</u>	<u>Total</u>
	-0-	-0-	-0-

Recommended for
Designation N/A

Recommended Against
Designation N/A

Total

The Needle Rock Instant Study Area was found not to possess wilderness characteristics, and is not recommended for wilderness designation.

Ownership in Study Area

BLM 80 acres

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Previous Designation

The area originally was classified as a Recreation and Public Purposes Site on November 13, 1967 (serial number C-2993). During Multiple Use Classification Meetings and upon publication in the Federal Register on June 13, 1968 (page 8681, serial no. C-3656), the previous R. & P. P. classification was cancelled (January 23, 1969) and Needle Rock was withdrawn from mineral entry. Needle Rock was officially designated a Natural Area on August 22, 1972.

B. Regional Description

Needle Rock is located four miles northeast of Crawford, Colorado, in the southeastern portion of Delta County. The total area encompasses eighty acres of public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management, and is surrounded by non-public lands primarily used agriculturally. The West Elk Mountains, administered by the Gunnison National Forest, are located a few miles to the east. The legal description of the location of Needle Rock is as follows:

Sixth Principal Meridian

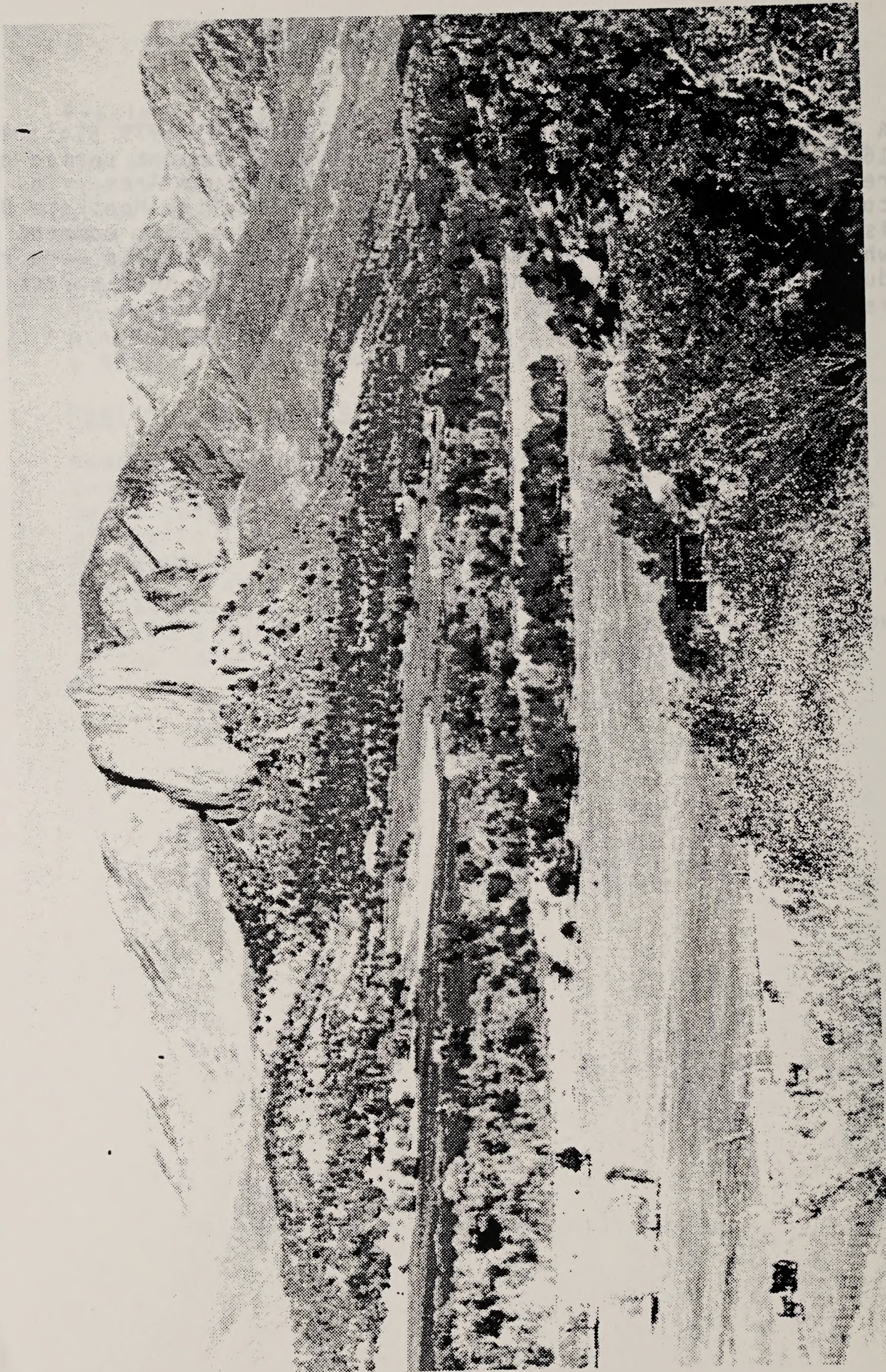
T. 15 S., R. 91 W.

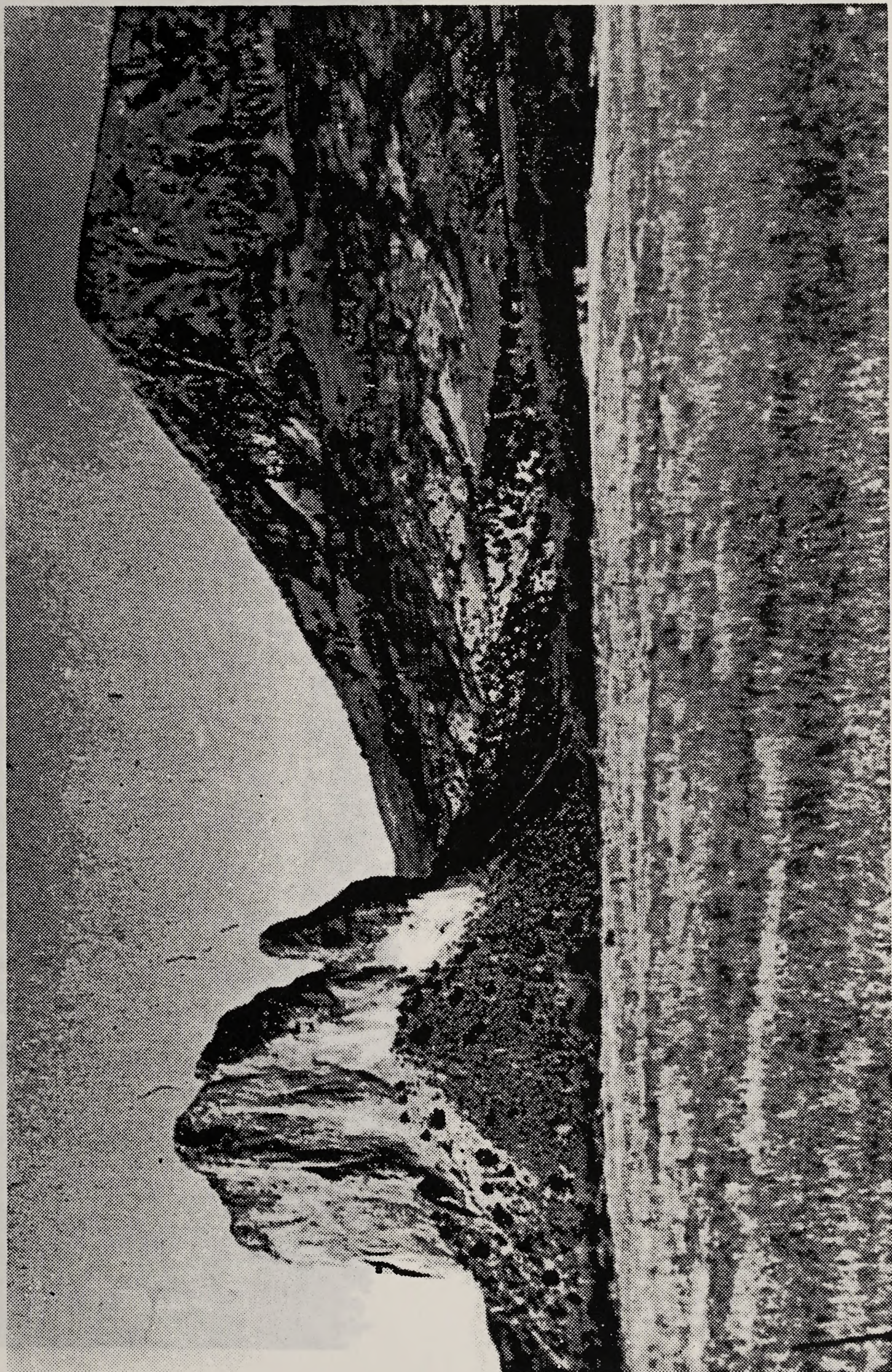
Sec. 27, NW1/4 NE1/4, NE1/4 NW1/4

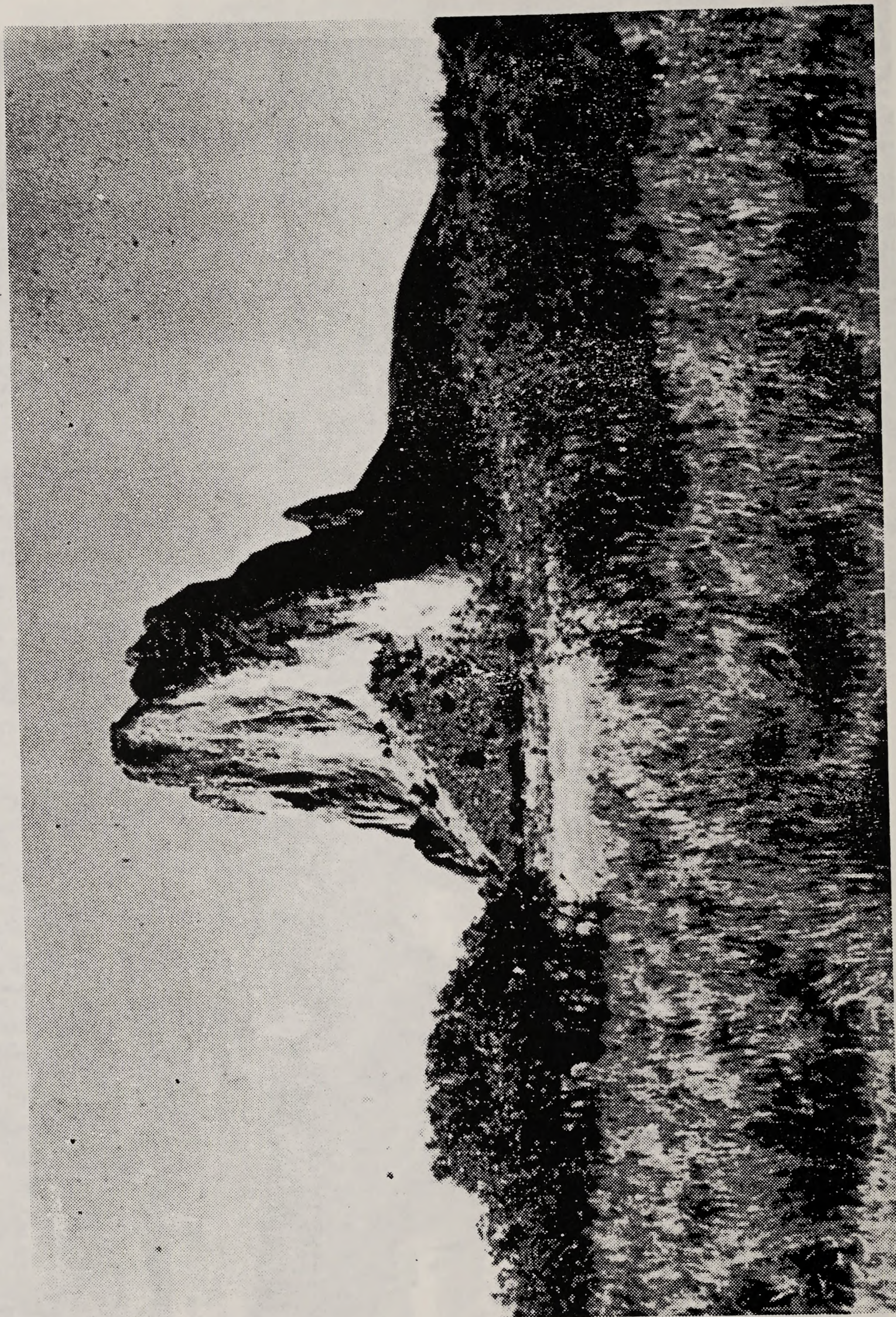
January 1980

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A Federal Register notice, published August 29, 1979 (Vol. 44, No. 169), announced the start of the thirty-day comment period on the recommendation for the Needle Rock Instant Study Area. In conjunction with the Federal Register notice, the Montrose District issued a NEWS RELEASE announcing this 30-day public comment period which was open until September 28, 1979. No comments were received during this public comment period regarding the Needle Rock ISA recommendation.







WILDLIFE INVENTORY
WILDLIFE SUMMARY SHEET

I. LOCATION

Inventory unit No. (area or island, grouping of areas or islands): N/A

Area/Island name: Nestor Rock ISA

County: Montgomery State: CO

II. SUMMARY

A. Results of wilderness characteristics analysis:

1. Does the area or island appear to be naturally? yes ☒ no ☐
2. Does the area or island offer outstanding opportunities for scientific study and research? yes ☒ no ☐
3. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? yes ☒ no ☐
4. Does the area or island have exceptional values? yes ☒ no ☐

APPENDICES

B. Resulting map.

Attach a map showing the results of the analysis. The map should be a map of the area or island, showing the boundaries of the area or island, and the results of the analysis. The map should be a map of the area or island, showing the boundaries of the area or island, and the results of the analysis.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Check one:

1. The area or island is proposed as a WSA.
2. The area or island is proposed as a WSA, but the area or island is not large enough to be approved as a WSA. The area or island is proposed as a WSA, but the area or island is not large enough to be approved as a WSA. The area or island is proposed as a WSA, but the area or island is not large enough to be approved as a WSA.

IV. APPROVAL

1. Area Manager: [Signature] Date: 12-2-72
2. District Manager: [Signature] Date: 1/2/73
3. State Director: [Signature] Date: 1/2/73

WILDERNESS INVENTORY
WILDERNESS SUMMARY SHEET

I. LOCATION

Inventory unit No. (area or island, grouping of areas or islands): N/A

Areas/Island name: NEEDLE ROCK ISA

District: Montrose State: CO

II. SUMMARY:

A. Results of wilderness characteristics analysis.

1. Does the area or island appear to be natural? ☒ yes ☐ no
2. Does the area or island offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type recreation? ☐ yes ☒ no
3. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? ☐ yes ☒ no
4. Does the area or island have supplemental values? ☒ yes ☐ no

B. Resulting map.

Attach a map showing inventory unit, roads, area with possibility of returning to a natural state, recommended boundary of wilderness study area (WSA).

III. RECOMMENDATION

Check one:

- ☒ Area or island should be approved as a WSA.
- ☐ Area or island does not qualify for wilderness study.
- ☐ A portion of the area(s) or island(s) should be approved as a WSA for further study and reported to the President. The restrictions imposed by Section 603 will no longer apply (reference to map) on the remainder of the area.

IV. APPROVAL

A. Area Manager: Charles M. Jantzen Date: 12-3-79

B. District Manager: Charles Jantzen Date: 12/6/79

C. State Director: Wendell Anderson Date: 1/9/80

WILDERNESS INTENSIVE INVENTORY.

NAME OF AREA Needle Rock Instant Study Area

Explain by a concise narrative the following essential wilderness characteristics (for guidance see text in the Wilderness Inventory Handbook):

1. SIZE

Narrative:

The Instant Study Area is eighty (80) acres in size, all of which is in public ownership administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

A county road and private road dissects the southeastern portion of the Instant Study Area, creating three roadless units. These three roadless units are approximately seventy (70), nine (9), and one (1) acre(s) in size. The county road is sixteen (16) feet wide, graveled, ditched on both sides, receives periodic maintenance, and receives relatively regular and continuous use. The private road provides access to a landowners home and hayfields.

All surrounding lands are in non-public land ownership.

Summary:

1. Does the area have at least 5,000 acres of contiguous land and is it of sufficient size to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition?

YES

☒ NO

(circle one)

2. Does the island have sufficient size to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition?

YES

NO

☒ N/A (circle one)

Signature

John Decker Leung

Date

August 1, 1979

NAME OF AREA: Needle Rock Instant Study Area

2. NATURALNESS

Narrative:

The only noticeable man-made influences found within the Instant Study Area are facilities associated with the recreation/interpretation of Needle Rock and some cattle usage.

A small parking area is graveled near the eastern boundary of the Instant Study Area. Associated with this parking area is a small cabana covering a picnic table, and interpretive display and register, and a primitive nature trail with informative signs.

The parking area and associated structures detract from the primeval character and influence of the natural landscape. The nature trail is compatible with the concept of wilderness and does not detract from the natural condition of the land. With the exception of the parking area, the Instant Study Area is without permanent improvements or human habitation.

Summary:

Does the area or island generally appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable?

☒ YES

☐ NO

(circle one)

Signature: John W. Decker, Jr.

Date August 1, 1979

NAME OF AREA: Needle Rock Instant Study Area

3. Outstanding Opportunity for Solitude or A Primitive and Unconfined Recreation Analysis

A. SOLITUDE

Narrative:

Although the area is fairly heavily vegetated with oak, service berry, and juniper, and while the majority of the Instant Study Area is extremely rugged in topography, the area is of such a small size that visitors would have difficulty in being screened from one another. Being this small in size and in combination with the steep, exposed and highly visible ridges, it would be extremely difficult to avoid the sights and sounds of other visitors within this Instant Study Area.

Summary:

Does the area have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

YES

☒ NO

(circle one)

Signature: Jon Wesley Linn

Date: August 1, 1979

NAME OF AREA: Needle Rock Instant Study Area

B. PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION

Narrative:

Due to the highly unique geologic feature of Needle Rock, the area does contain opportunities for recreation in the form of nature study and rock climbing, but these are not considered to be outstanding in a wilderness context due to the small size of the unit. Associated with the nature study opportunities is the diverse vegetation as a result of an old fire, and the possibility of a falcon nest on Needle Rock.

Summary:

Does the area have outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?

Yes

☒ No

(Circle One)

Signature: William C. Gattamby for Jon Wesley Seering Date: 1-10-80

NAME OF AREA: Needle Rock Instant Study Area

4. SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES

Narrative:

Needle Rock is believed to be a neck of intrusive igneous rock or a laccolith. It originated in late Miocene as molten rock remained below the earth's surface, and intruded into existing sedimentary formation. Gradually, with the passing of several million years, the overlying sedimentary beds eroded away leaving this core of igneous rock about 800 feet above the valley floor.

The lower slopes of Needle Rock is the site of an old burn, thus the area exhibits a combination of both pioneer and climax species of vegetation. Deer are found in this area where oak and service berry are the aspect dominant, and there is an unconfirmed siting of a falcon on Needle Rock (May 31, 1979).

Summary:

Does the area contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value?

☒ YES

NO

(circle one)

Signature: John W. Long, Sr.

Date: August 1, 1979

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WILDERNESS REPORT

Page

Introduction

1

Recommendation

2

Maps

Map 1 - General Location

Map 2 - Study Area Boundary Land Status

Map 3 - Contiguous Roadless Area/Roads

Statistical Summary

3

Background Information

4

Rare Lizard and Snake

Public Participation

5

Instant Study Area

Photographs

Appendices

Wilderness Inventory

Montrose District, Colorado

Moab District, Utah

Bureau of Land Management

Department of the Interior

February 1, 1980

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
Recommendation	2
Maps	
Map 1 - General Location	
Map 2 - Study Area Boundary Land Status	
Map 3 - Contiguous Roadless Area/Roads	
Statistical Summary	3
Background Information	4
Public Participation	5
Photographs	
Appendices	
Wilderness Inventory	i

INTRODUCTION

Section 603 (a) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) provides in part:

That the Secretary of the Interior shall report to the President by July 1, 1980, his recommendations on those areas which the Secretary has, prior to November 1, 1975, formally identified as natural or primitive areas.

There are eleven primitive areas and forty-four natural areas on Bureau lands for which this accelerated wilderness review is required. These areas are referred to as wilderness "Instant Study Areas" (ISAs).

The Montrose District of the Bureau of Land Management is required to inventory the ISA, and in conjunction with the Moab District in Utah, to inventory any contiguous lands to determine if the lands exhibit wilderness characteristics. This report presents the Bureau's findings and request for deferment of a suitability/non-suitability report to Congress until these contiguous lands can be inventoried.

RECOMMENDATION

The Rare Lizard and Snake Instant Study Area by itself does not meet the wilderness criteria as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-577). The surrounding contiguous roadless lands appear to exhibit potential wilderness characteristics. Therefore, the Rare Lizard and Snake Instant Study Area is being recommended for deferment while the contiguous lands undergo an intensive wilderness inventory and a final decision is announced by the State Directors of Colorado and Utah.

Harlyn V. Jones
District Manager, Montrose District

Jan. 2, 1980
Date

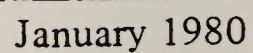
Don J. Anderson
State Director, Colorado

1/9/80
Date

Director, Bureau of Land Management

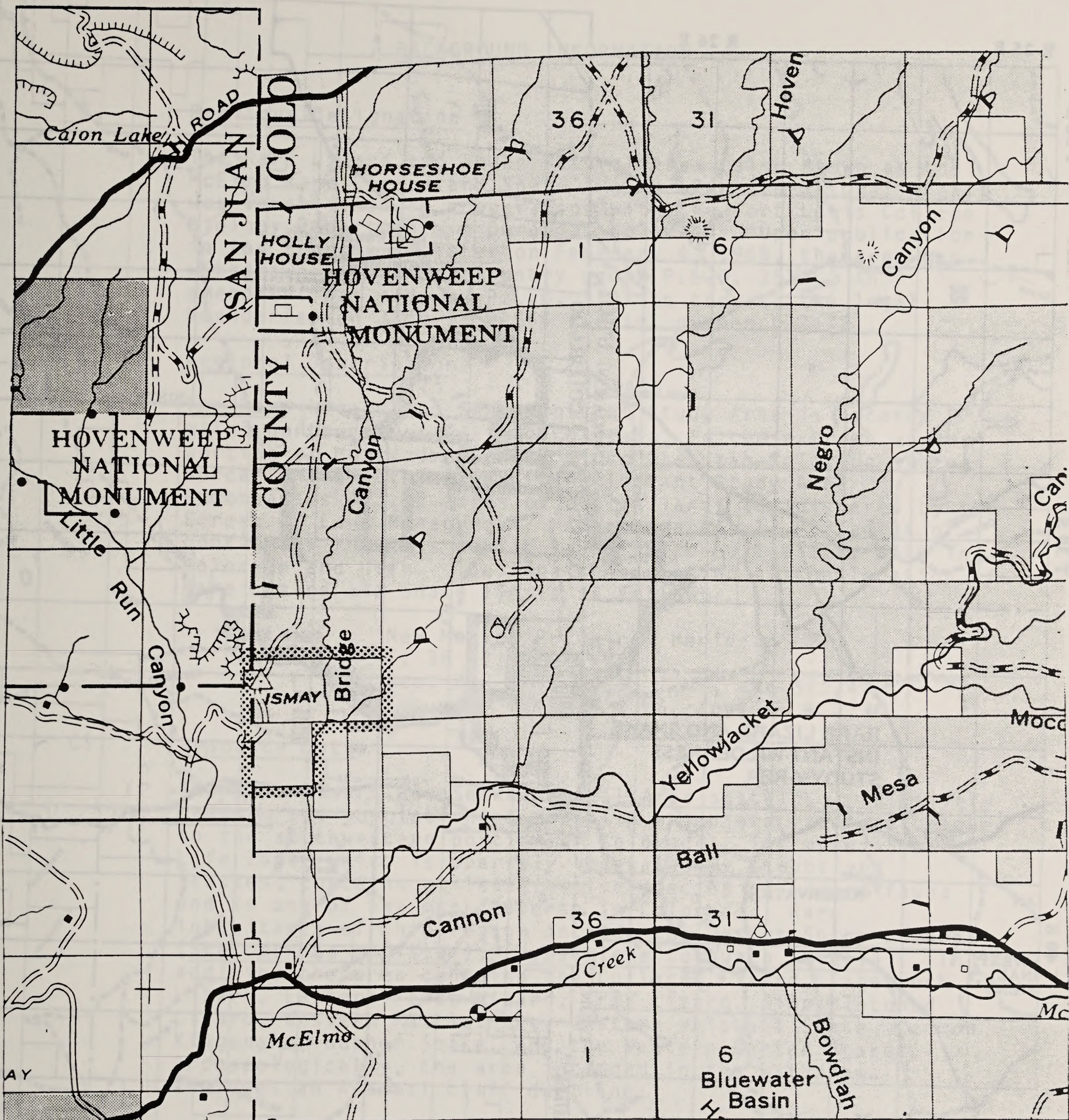
Date

COLORADO



Location of Rare Lizard and Snake Instant Wilderness Study Area

Map 1



..... Boundary of the Rare Lizard and Snake
Instant Wilderness Study Area

Public Lands

State Lands

Private Lands

Scale: 1 inch = 1 mile

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Previous Designation

The Rare Lizard and Snake Natural Area (also known as the McElmo Rare Lizard and Snake Area or Reptile Natural Area) was established in cooperation with the Fort Lewis College Biology Department in Durango, Colorado. Upon publication in the Federal Register on February 4, 1965, the area was withdrawn from mineral entry under P.L.O. 3530. An amendment was made by P.L.O. 3701 to correct the legal boundaries on June 18, 1964 (serial number C-3672).

B. Regional Description

The Rare Lizard and Snake Instant Study Area is located 27 miles northwest of Cortez, Colorado, in the extreme western portion of Montezuma County along the Utah-Colorado state border. The total area of the Instant Study Area encompasses 443.39 acres of public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management. Approximately 12,917 acres of contiguous roadless public lands surround the ISA; both in Colorado and Utah. The legal Description of the location of Rare Lizard and Snake ISA is as follows:

New Mexico Principal Meridian
T. 36 N., R. 20 W.
Sec. 22, lots 3, 4, 7, 8, and SE1/4;
Sec. 27, lots 1, 2, 5, and 6

C. Resource Data

The Rare Lizard and Snake Natural Area sustains a relatively undisturbed population of reptilia which are rare and unique to the southwestern portion of Colorado. The upper Sonoran Life Zone, which is sparsely vegetated by shrubs and grasses, contains at least twelve species of lizard fauna and is one of the most diverse in Colorado. Rare inhabitants of this region include the Desert Spiny Lizard (Sceloporous magister), (Hypsiglene torquata loreala). In addition the area contains the Collared Lizard, Sagebrush Lizard, Eastern Fence Lizard, Tree Lizard, Side-Blotched Lizard, Western Rattlesnake, Western Whiptail Snake, Common Kingsnake, Gopher Snake, and the Western Garter Snake. Archaeologically, the area included in the withdrawal includes an Anasazi cliff dwelling.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

Rare Lizard and Snake

Instant Study Area

Colorado

Acres With Potential Wilderness Characteristics

<u>Previously Designated Area</u>	<u>Contiguous Lands (if any)</u>	<u>Total</u>
443	11,970 (CO)	13,333

Acres With Wilder- ness Characteristics

Recommended for Designation	N/A
--------------------------------	-----

Recommended against Designation	N/A
------------------------------------	-----

Total

The Rare Lizard and Snake Instant Study Area in itself does not possess wilderness characteristics. The area may possibly contain wilderness characteristics when combined with the additional contiguous roadless lands.

Ownership in Instant Study Area

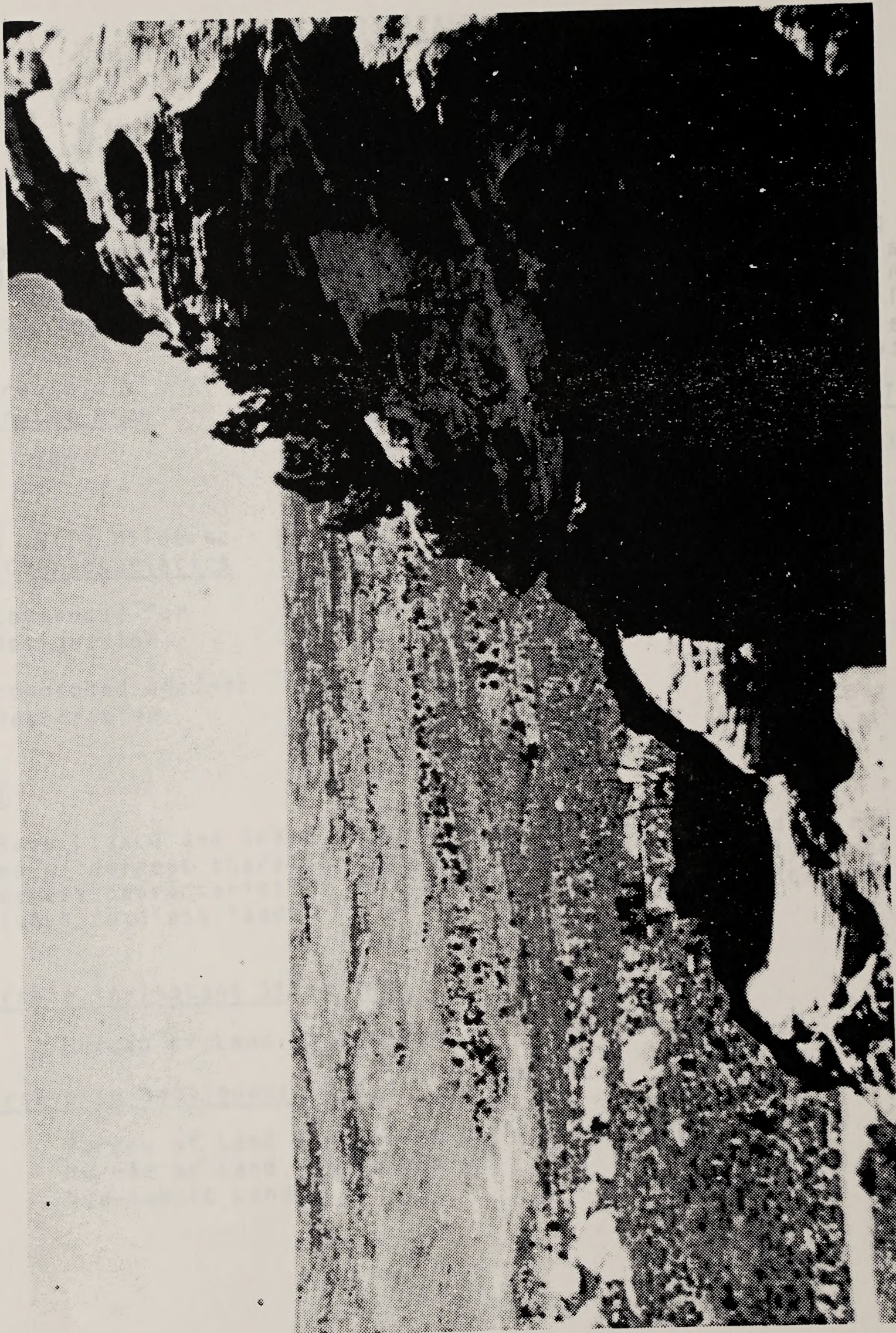
Bureau of Land Management	443 acres
---------------------------	-----------

Ownership in Contiguous Lands

Bureau of Land Management (CO)	11,970 acres
Bureau of Land Management (UT)	920 acres
Non-public Lands	160 acres

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The public review period for the Rare Lizard and Snake Instant Study Area and contiguous roadless lands will be conducted in conjunction with the Colorado Intensive Inventory schedule. A ninety-day (90) public review period will be held February 1 to April 30, 1980 and a final decision will be announced by the State Director (SD) by September 1980.





WILDERNESS INVENTORY

SITUATION EVALUATION

I. Wilderness Site Identification

Area/Island Name (if available): Rare Lizard and Snake

Inventory Unit No.: CO-030-243 (Rare Lizard & Snake I (A))

UTM: 090-121

State: Colorado

District: Montrose

II. Unit Analysis

A/C. Ownership / Size: This inventory unit consists of 14,640 acres of public lands. Within this inventory unit are 120 acres of non-public land inholdings. This unit also includes 120 acres Rare Lizard and Snake Habitat Study Area.

APPENDICES

D. Leases: There are some grazing leases in this unit.

F. Permanent Improvements: There are several stock reservoirs within this unit.

G. Existing Uses: The majority of this area is utilized by grazing.

H. Human Activity: This unit is heavy in archeological history.

I. Land Treatment / Manipulation: In the northern portion of this unit is some relatively small, old clearings. Also in the north-central portion are some old evidence of check dams and contour furrowing.

J. Vegetation / Topography: The area is characterized by numerous canyons with rugged, steep walls.

WILDERNESS INVENTORY

SITUATION EVALUATION

I. Wilderness Unit Identification

Area/Island Name (if available): Rare Lizard and Snake

Inventory Unit No.: CO-030-263 (Rare Lizard & Snake I.S.A.)
UT-060-121

State: Colorado

District: Montrose

II. Unit Analysis

A/B. Ownership / Size: This inventory unit consists of 14,640 acres of public lands. Within this inventory unit are 120 acres of non-public land inholdings. This unit also includes the 480 acre Rare Lizard and Snake Instant Study Area.

D. Leases: There are some grazing leases in this unit.

F. Permanent Improvements: There are several stock reservoirs within this unit.

G. Existing Uses: The majority of this area is utilized by grazing.

H. Human Activity: This unit is heavy in archaeological history.

I. Land Treatment / Manipulation: In the northern portion of this unit is some relatively small, old chainings. Also in the northcentral portion are some old evidence of check dams and contour furrowing.

J. Vegetation / Topography: The area is characterized by numerous canyons with rugged, steep walls.

II. Unit Analysis (Continued...)

Vegetation, although fairly sparse, consists of a high diversity and includes piñon-juniper, greasewood, grasses, sagebrush, and saltbrush.

K. Contiguous lands: This unit is contiguous to Utah's inventory unit UT-060-121.

III. Unit Evaluation

A. Select one of the following:

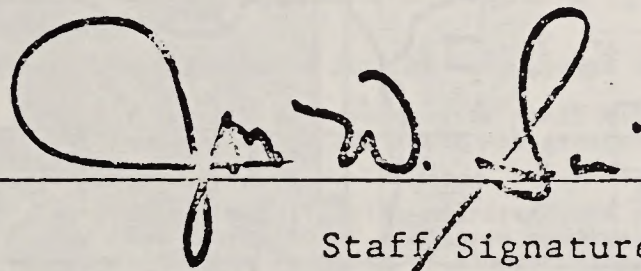
- ① The area appears to have potential for further wilderness consideration.
2. The area clearly and obviously does not have potential for wilderness.

② Is area or island of sufficient size? *yes*

C. Is there enough public support for intensive wilderness inventory of the area or island or any part?

IV. Unit Recommendation

- ① A. Area or island (or groupings) is recommended for intensive wilderness inventory.
- B. Area or island (or groupings) is recommended as not qualifying for further inventory and should be dropped from the wilderness review process.

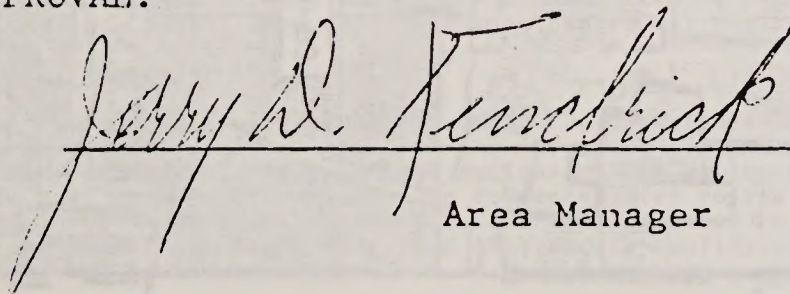


Staff Signature

3/6/79

Date

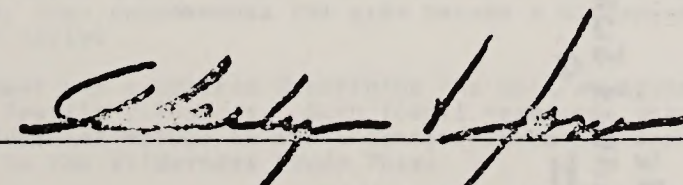
APPROVAL:



Area Manager

MAR 6 1979

Date



District Manager

3/11/79

Date

MP 28



GENERAL LOCATION:

West of Cortez (Montezuma County)

UNIT IDENTIFICATION:

Size:	12,440 acres	Inventory No:	CO-030-263
District:	Montrose	Area Name:	Rare Lizard and Snake ISA
		State:	Colorado

SUMMARY OF UNIT ANALYSIS:

No easements exist on the unit. Grazing is the primary land use. Various range improvements in the form of stock reservoirs, check dams, contour furrowing and chainings can be found in the area. All of these land treatments appear to be old and are reverting back to natural condition. No active mining is present, but Mobil Oil does have a lease for CO₂ development. There are oil and gas leases in the unit. The area has a high density of archeological sites and ruins (between 16-30 per square mile). The primary vegetation is sage, saltbush, grassland and pinion-juniper. The area is characterized by rolling mesa tops and rugged canyons. Twenty acres of non-public land exist within the unit. The unit also includes the 480-acre Rare Lizard and Snake Instant Study Area. Land ownership outside the unit boundaries is a mixture of non-public and public lands. This unit is contiguous with Utah Inventory Unit No. UT-060-232, which has been recommended for intensive inventory.

BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS:

Additions:

No additions were made in this unit.

Deletions:

Approximately 2,200 acres were deleted from the southern portion of the unit due to the presence of a way which provides access to private land inholdings. This alteration caused the boundary to bisect the unit. Additional information revealed that Cannonball Mesa contained a way that, although it appeared to be no more than tire tracks, was used on a regular and continuous basis for purposes of stock reservoir maintenance and archeological stabilization. Moreover, managing the southern portion as a separate unit is not feasible due to size. As a result, the southern portion of the unit, Cannonball Mesa, has been deleted.

ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ten comments were submitted for the Rare Lizard and Snake Unit.

Size: The only comment concerning size dealt with the irregular shape of the unit boundary. The statement was general and no inferences were made.

Roads: Two comments specifically addressed the roads of the area. One stated that extension of roads was necessary for access to BLM land. The other comment referred to county roads existing in the unit. No mention of specific roads was made and field work revealed no existing roads in the unit.

Naturalness: One comment was made that the unit failed to meet naturalness criteria. Slides were presented showing various roads, stockpounds and fences. Upon field investigation, however, the roads were outside the unit along the boundary. Others were distinctively ways, presenting minimal impact on the area.

The stockpounds were substantially unnoticeable and revegetating naturally. Impact upon naturalness by fences was negligible.

General Comments:

Two comments were made concerning the importance of the unit for CO₂ development. They suggested that dropping the unit from wilderness consideration would help achieve national goals of increasing domestic oil, gas, coal, and uranium. Two comments refer to the importance of time in developing CO₂ leases and that waiting until the study phase of the Wilderness Management Plan to evaluate conflicting resource values may be uneconomical.

Members of a concerned wilderness group entered two comments stating this area meets criteria established by the Wilderness Act. In addition, they recommended the area become a Wilderness Study Area for further review.

A comment was submitted describing the unit as having possible vertebrate fossils resources. Such fossil resources are considered under supplemental values in the intensive inventory and are further considered in the Wilderness Study Phase.

INVENTORY UNIT NO. CO-030-263 Continued

A general comment stated if the BLM was interested in preserving canyon-type areas typical of southwest Colorado, that an area such as 263 would be sufficient.

Another general comment was made concerning the uniqueness of pinyon-juniper and high desert within the wilderness system. The comment stated that this type of ecosystem had limited representation within wilderness and would be appropriate to classify additional areas under this system.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDING INTENSIVE INVENTORY:

The unit is of sufficient size (12,440 acres), contains few imprints of man. Limited access to the area enhance wilderness qualities. Though the area contains potential gas and oil sites, the naturalness of the area has been retained since no sites have been developed.

REFERENCES:

Colorado State Planning Office
Photo Map No:

24-29
42-47
87-92
101-106

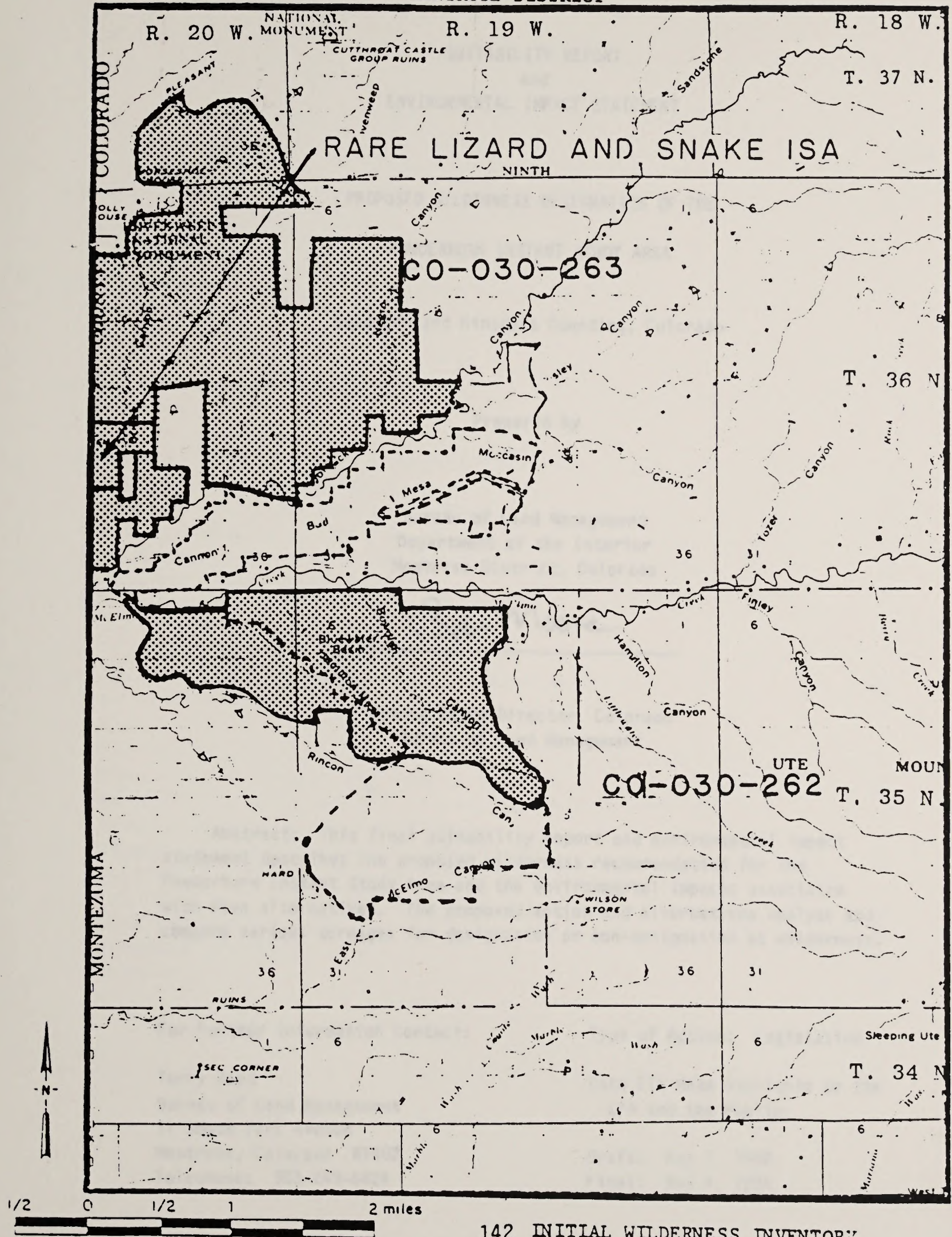
U.S.G.S. Topographic Quad:

Aneth I SE
Moqui SW
Moqui NW
Aneth I NE
Cajon Mesa

Colorado Surface Minerals Management Color Quad: SW-19

NOTE: See page 142 for map of the unit.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
Colorado
MONTROSE DISTRICT



142 INITIAL WILDERNESS INVENTORY
Under Section 603
Federal Land Policy and Management Act
of October 21, 1976

FINAL

SUITABILITY REPORT
and
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

PROPOSED WILDERNESS DESIGNATION OF THE
POWDERHORN INSTANT STUDY AREA

Gunnison and Hinsdale Counties, Colorado

Prepared by

Bureau of Land Management
Department of the Interior
Montrose District, Colorado

Bob Moore

Acting State Director, Colorado
Bureau of Land Management

Abstract: This final suitability report and environmental impact statement describes the proposed wilderness recommendation for the Powderhorn Instant Study Area and the environmental impacts associated with five alternatives. The proposed action and alternatives analyze and compare various acreages for designation or non-designation as wilderness.

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Type of Action: Legislative

Date EIS Made Available to the
EPA and the Public:

Draft: May 7, 1980
Final: May 4, 1984

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	iii
FINAL RECOMMENDATION	v
PART 1 - Final Suitability Report.	1
Summary of Wilderness Characteristics.	3
Background Information	6
Summary of Public Participation	7
Photographs.	17
Wilderness Management Policy	18
Economic and Social Impacts.	19
PART 2 - Final Environmental Impact Statement.	23
Summary	25
Chapter 1 - Purpose and Need	27
Chapter 2 - Alternatives Including the Proposed Action	31
Chapter 3 - Affected Environment	37
Chapter 4 - Environmental Consequences	65
Chapter 5 - Public Participation Consultation and Coordination	79
List of Contributors	179
Glossary of Terms.	181
References	183
APPENDICES	185

INTRODUCTION

The Powderhorn Wilderness Study was made in response to Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) which provides that formally designated natural and primitive areas be reviewed for their wilderness characteristics and that the Secretary of the Interior report recommendations on their suitability or nonsuitability for wilderness preservation to the President. The review of these areas was to be made according to guidelines in section 3(d) of the Wilderness Act of 1964. Final designation of the area as part of the National Wilderness System is to be made by the Congress.

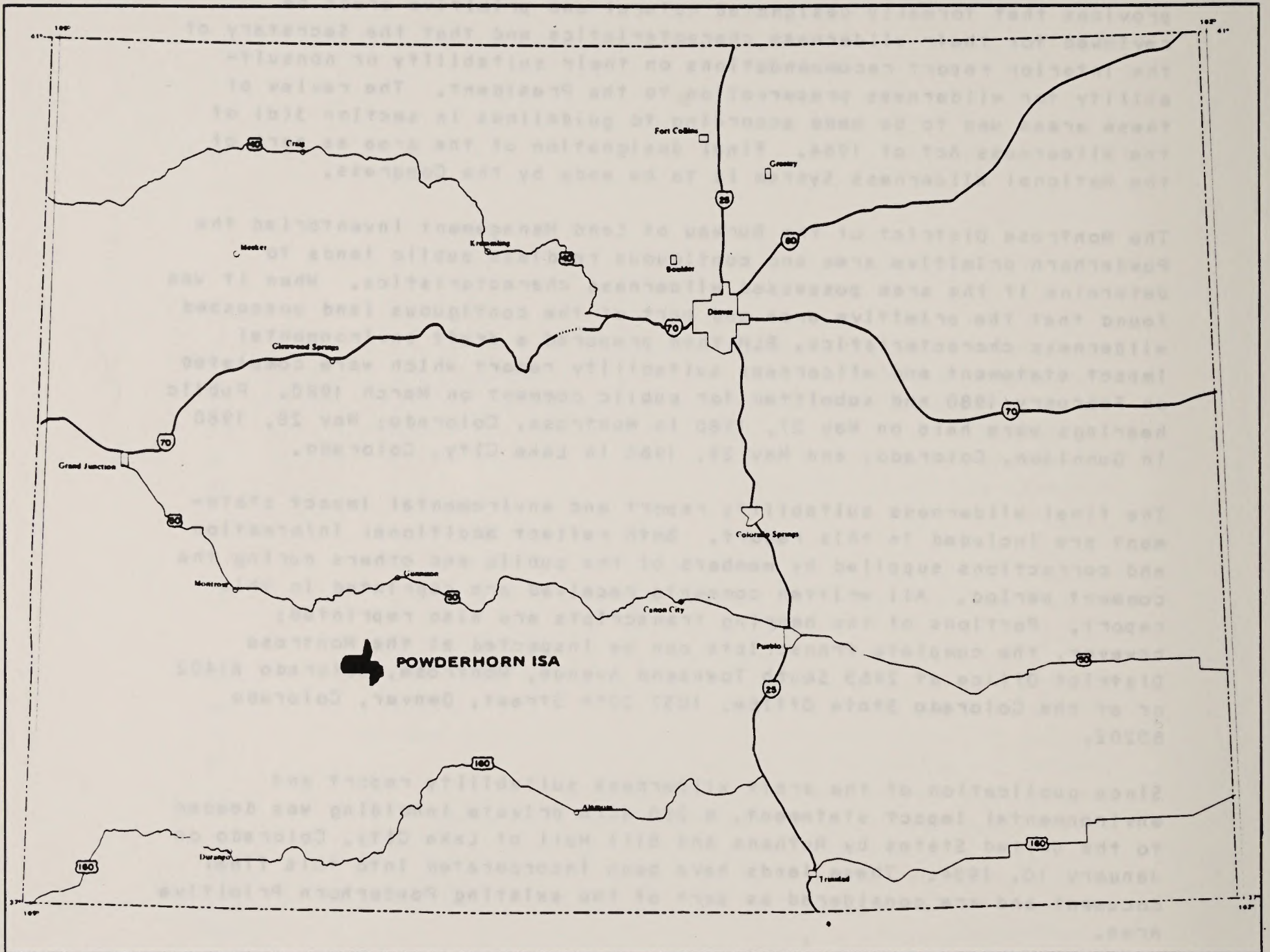
The Montrose District of the Bureau of Land Management inventoried the Powderhorn primitive area and contiguous roadless public lands to determine if the area possessed wilderness characteristics. When it was found that the primitive area and part of the contiguous land possessed wilderness characteristics, BLM then prepared a draft environmental impact statement and wilderness suitability report which were completed on February 1980 and submitted for public comment on March 1980. Public hearings were held on May 27, 1980 in Montrose, Colorado; May 28, 1980 in Gunnison, Colorado; and May 29, 1980 in Lake City, Colorado.

The final wilderness suitability report and environmental impact statement are included in this report. Both reflect additional information and corrections supplied by members of the public and others during the comment period. All written comments received are reprinted in this report. Portions of the hearing transcripts are also reprinted; however, the complete transcripts can be inspected at the Montrose District Office at 2465 South Townsend Avenue, Montrose, Colorado 81402 or at the Colorado State Office, 1037 20th Street, Denver, Colorado 80202.

Since publication of the draft wilderness suitability report and environmental impact statement, a 280 acre private inholding was deeded to the United States by Ruthana and Bill Hall of Lake City, Colorado on January 10, 1984. These lands have been incorporated into this final document and are considered as part of the existing Powderhorn Primitive Area.

Additional material related to the report not part of this package includes: The Wilderness Inventory and Gunnison Basin and American Flats/Silverton URA/MFP, and may be reviewed at the Montrose District Office, Montrose, Colorado.

STATE OF COLORADO

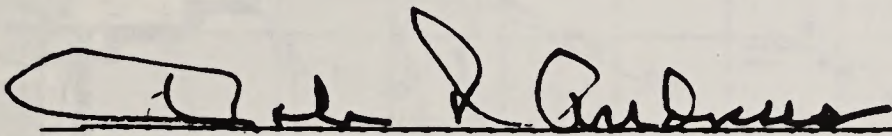


LOCATION MAP

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recommends that the Congress of the United States incorporate the Powderhorn Primitive Area, and all contiguous public lands having wilderness characteristics and deemed manageable as wilderness, as described in this document and totaling 43,311 acres, into the National Wilderness Preservation System. Lands within the study area either lacking wilderness characteristics or deemed unmanageable as wilderness total 28,860 acres (26,940 acres contiguous to the primitive area and 1,920 acres of subsurface mineral estate held by the State of Colorado within the primitive area), and are recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The Powderhorn contains a unique natural alpine environment of outstanding natural beauty which provides exceptional opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. The area meets the criteria of Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964, and multiple use resource analysis revealed no significant resource conflicts resulting from a wilderness designation.



State Director, Colorado

3/10/80

Date

/s/ Robert F. Burford

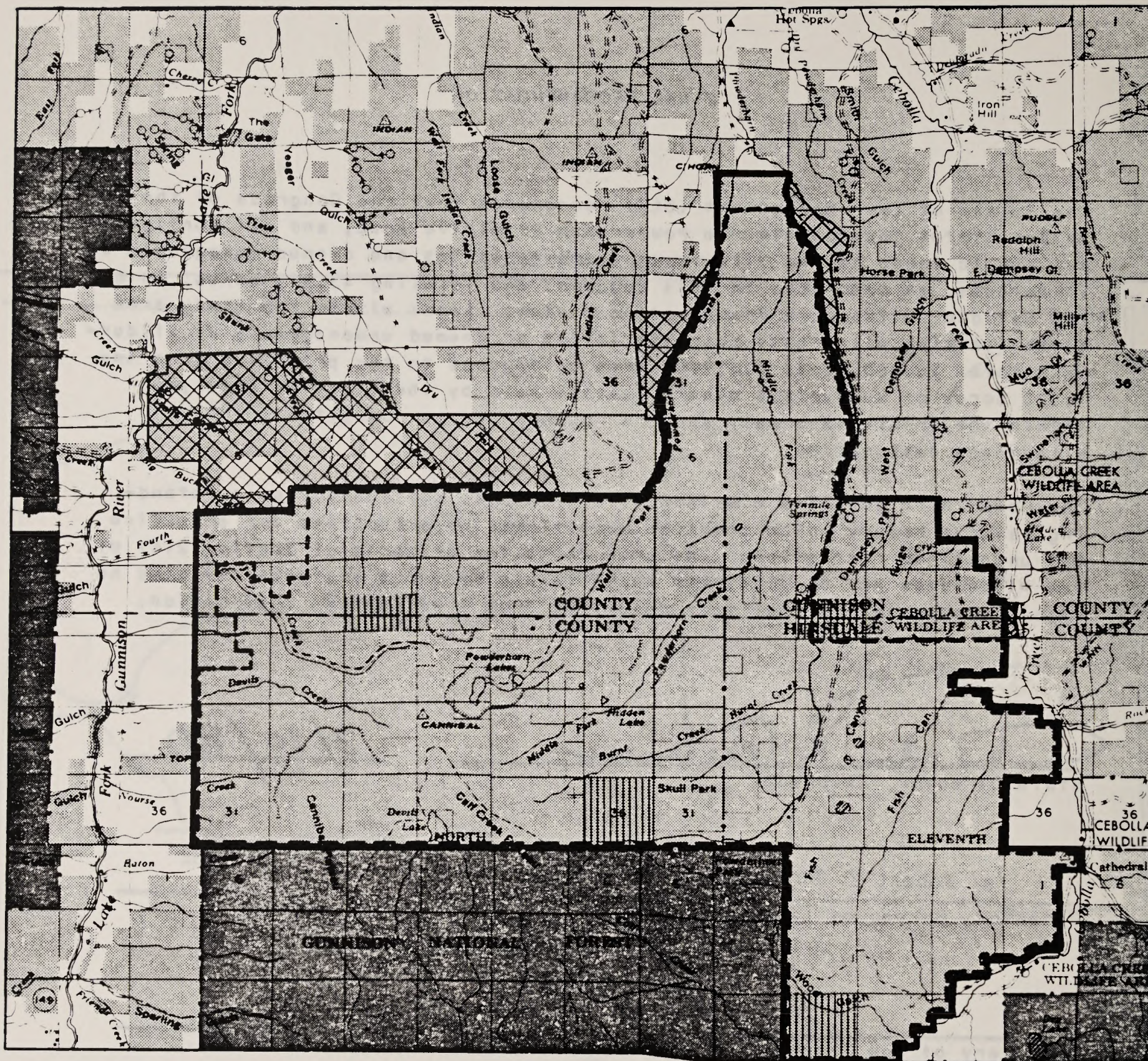
Director, Bureau of Land Management

March 1, 1982

Date

Secretary of the Interior

Date



POWDERHORN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

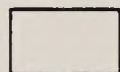
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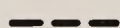
BLM LAND



NATIONAL FOREST LAND



PRIVATE LAND



POWDERHORN PRIMITIVE AREA BOUNDARY



PROPOSED WILDERNESS BOUNDARY



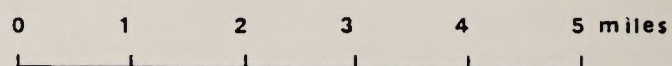
STUDY AREA BOUNDARY



STUDY AREA PROPOSED UNSUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS DESIGNATION



SPLIT ESTATE MINERAL LANDS



PART 1

FINAL SUITABILITY REPORT

SUMMARY OF WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

The lands recommended as suitable for wilderness designation total 43,311 acres. These lands include the existing Powderhorn Primitive Area and contiguous lands containing wilderness characteristics which add to the manageability of the area. These contiguous lands include the Dempsey Park, Powderhorn Creek Confluence, and Fourth of July Creek areas. (See Appendix A, legal description, and map on page vi.)

A total of 5,189 acres of lands contiguous to the primitive area were found to contain wilderness characteristics, but were recommended unsuitable for wilderness designation. These lands were deemed as unmanageable as inclusion of these areas would require either acquisition of approximately 1,000 acres of private lands or closures of existing roads to eliminate "cherry stemming." These contiguous lands include the West Dempsey Gulch, Ten Mile Springs, Skunk Creek, Hells Canyon, Indian Creek, and Irregular tract areas.

A total of 1,920 acres of land within the primitive area was found to contain wilderness characteristics, but was recommended unsuitable for wilderness designation. These lands consist of split estate lands where the Federal government manages the surface and the State of Colorado holds the subsurface mineral rights. The Interior Board of Land Appeals ruled that such split estate lands are unmanageable as wilderness.

Summary of Acreage

Area with Wilderness Characteristics	Primitive Area	Lands Contiguous with Primitive Area	Total
Recommended for designation	38,840	4,471	43,311 *
Not recommended for designation	0	5,189	5,189
Total acreage reviewed for wilderness			48,500
Area without wilderness characteristics	0	26,940	26,940
TOTAL	38,840	36,600	75,440

*This acreage figure does not include the private lands located within the proposed wilderness area. These lands total 40 acres.

Naturalness

Topography and Vegetation

The Powderhorn is characterized by relatively level alpine plateaus deeply dissected by glacial valleys and cirque basins. The elevation ranges from 12,644 feet on Calf Creek Plateau at the southern end to approximately 8,600 feet along Powderhorn Creek at the northern end. Vegetation generally follows the elevation with alpine tundra, spruce/fir forests, ponderosa pine and wide-open parks, and sagebrush/grassland being present. The area also contains several small ponds or lakes in the western half of the unit and includes meadow-type vegetation around these water bodies.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude

Topography, vegetation and size all contribute to the unit's outstanding opportunities for solitude.

The relatively large size of the unit (43,311 acres) with its rugged and diverse terrain characterized by steep-sided drainages radiating outward from Calf Creek Plateau, provide numerous locations where opportunities for solitude are present. The dense stands of spruce, fir and aspen found along these drainages and on the ridges further enhance solitude opportunities through feelings of seclusion and intimacy. The higher elevations, within the alpine tundra environment of the Calf Creek Plateau, offer sweeping vistas of the surrounding mountains and adjacent proposed or designated wilderness, projecting a feeling of vastness which enhances solitude. Due to these combined factors, the area contains outstanding opportunities for solitude.

Outstanding Opportunity for a Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The block-like configuration and relatively large size of the unit allow for unconfined freedom of movement of recreationists, particularly over the alpine tundra portions of the area. These areas provide outstanding opportunities for hiking or horseback riding during the summer and fall, and cross-country skiing or snowshoeing during the winter and spring periods. Lakes in the area, and the forks of Powderhorn Creek, provide fishing opportunities as well as scenic locations for camping. The varied wildlife of the area, including beaver, ptarmigan, bobcat, mountain lion and sizeable elk herd, provide ample viewing and hunting possibilities. These factors all contribute to provide outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Significant Resource Data

The high, relatively flat alpine tundra topography increases the opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation for it allows for freedom of movement without physical barriers. In nearly every adjacent wilderness, or de facto wilderness, the primitive opportunities for the majority of users are limited to trail hiking or horseback riding. The Powderhorn Area

facilitates and promotes cross-country travel which is a more unrestricted recreational experience, and allows for dispersion of the user, enhancing opportunities for solitude.

In addition to the wilderness characteristics, the Powderhorn includes some outstanding and unique supplemental values which add to the wilderness resource:

1. Ecologically, the Powderhorn area encompasses one of the largest and least disturbed, relatively flat alpine tundra areas in the contiguous United States. This ecosystem includes the northern parts of Cannibal and Calf Creek Plateaus.
2. Geologically, the area consists of Tertiary volcanic deposits, both lava flow and ash flow tuff, in some areas believed to be five thousand feet in thickness. Alpine glaciation changed the feature of the landscape by creating cirque basins, glacial tarns, moraine deposits and lakes, U-shaped valleys and rock glaciers.
3. Scientific and educational values exist with opportunities to study and analyze alpine and subalpine ecosystems, and glacial and igneous geology and geomorphology. The Powderhorn area includes a large elk breeding ground and peripheral usage by Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. In the alpine tundra are found ptarmigan as well as a large variety of alpine plant types such as moss campion (Silene acaulis), alpine forget-me-not (Eritrichium elongatum), and Jacobs ladder (Polemonium pulcherrimum).
4. Scenic values are very high due to a combination of diverse vegetative types and topographic landforms which are relatively unique within the region. Man-made features are noticeably lacking or are harmonious with the natural landscape. The Powderhorn offers outstanding views of the San Juan Mountains. These adjacent lands, managed largely by the U.S. Forest Service, include several wilderness or proposed wilderness areas.
5. Historically, the Powderhorn area was utilized by the Ute Indians as a summer hunting ground, as were the majority of the San Juan Mountains. The Powderhorn is believed to be the general area of the infamous Alferd E. Packer's cannibalistic "feast" of five men in the winter of 1874. Some old cabins or remnants are found within the Powderhorn and, although they enhance the appeal of the wilderness resource, their historical value is undetermined at this time.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Previous Designation

Historically, the Powderhorn area has been recognized by the Bureau for its primitive and wild values. In the 1969 Cebolla Unit Resource Analysis, the Powderhorn area was recognized as roadless. In 1970, the Bureau prepared a document entitled Action Plan for Potential "Primitive Area" Designation for Powderhorn Lakes Roadless Area. This report outlined and evaluated a proposal recommending primitive area status be given Powderhorn. The 1972 Cebolla-Powderhorn Management Framework Plan recommended the Powderhorn as a primitive area. In April 1973, the Powderhorn Primitive Area was withdrawn from all forms of disposition under the public land laws, including the mining laws, with the exception of leasing under the mineral leasing laws, for the protection of scenic and primitive values (38 FR 22625; withdrawal file C-17286). In August 1973 the Secretary of the Interior formally designated the Powderhorn Primitive Area (38 FR 23427).

Description of the Report Area

The area surrounding the Powderhorn Primitive Area is rural and sparsely populated by ranch and farm families living along Cebolla Creek and the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River. In addition, to the north of the primitive area is the small community of Powderhorn and to the southwest is the town of Lake City. Much of Lake City's revenues are a result of tourism. The southern portion of the Powderhorn borders a Gunnison National Forest RARE II Area, Cannibal Plateau (31,990 acres), proposed by the Forest Service for further wilderness study. To the west of the Powderhorn is the existing Big Blue Wilderness and to the east is the La Garita Wilderness.

The study area may be reached by three main routes. Access to the northern portion of the area is provided via the BLM's Indian Creek Road. The northeastern portion is served by the Ten Mile Springs Road. The eastern portion of the area is provided access by a county road along Cebolla Creek and by BLM's system of trails in the area.

Of the approximately 75,440 acres inventoried, 48,500 acres were determined to contain wilderness characteristics. These 48,500 acres were found to be primarily natural in character and contained outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Approximately 26,940 acres, consisting of 11 areas, were found to be roadless but lacking wilderness characteristics. Some lands, due to extensive logging of Englemann spruce, Douglas fir and ponderosa pine, or mineral prospecting associated with thorium, titanium and manganese, no longer retain their natural or primeval character. Other areas were excluded for lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. These areas were either physically separated from the ISA boundary or of such narrow conformity and configuration that outstanding opportunities were nonexistent. A total of 1,920 acres of split estate lands within the primitive area, although found to contain wilderness characteristics, were recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation because the

Interior Board of Land Appeals has ruled such split estate lands cannot be managed as wilderness. Upon completion of the Wilderness Study process a total of 43,311 acres were recommended for wilderness designation.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The land use planning (Management Framework Plan or MFP) update for the EIS area was initiated during the fall of 1978. Public meetings were held in Lake City, Gunnison, Silverton, Montrose, and Denver to identify issues and concerns for the planning effort which included the Powderhorn Instant Study Area. The scheduling and purpose of these meetings were outlined in press releases to the local media. During this period coordination meetings were also held for local, state, and federal agencies.

In May of 1979, scoping/planning meetings were held in Lake City, Gunnison, Silverton, Montrose, and Denver in conjunction with completion of the MFP Step II. Prior to the meetings, notice of intent to hold scoping meetings and prepare an EIS was published in the Federal Register and local media. Also prior to the meetings, a summary of the MFP II recommendations was sent to interested federal, state, and local agencies, Livestock Grazing Advisory Board, and interest groups, and to all livestock permittees in the EIS area.

Prior to and during the EIS writing process, specific consultation was initiated with several state and federal agencies. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) was consulted concerning threatened or endangered plants and animals. The FWS responded that no endangered species would be affected. The Colorado Division of Wildlife was consulted concerning wildlife populations. The State Historic Preservation Officer reviewed the draft materials for possible impacts on cultural resources.

A public hearing announcement was published in the Federal Register on May 7, 1980. Written notification of the hearings and information on the study were sent to Governor Richard D. Lamm of Colorado; U.S. Senators Gary Hart and William Armstrong; U.S. Representatives Ray Kogovsek, James Johnson, Ken Kramer, Patricia Schroeder and Tim Wirth; five members of the Colorado State Legislature; twelve federal agencies and departments; the Colorado State Clearinghouse; eighteen additional local officials and agencies; and numerous individuals and organizations.

The hearings were held in Colorado at Montrose, Gunnison, and Lake City on May 27, 28, and 29, 1980, respectively. Thirty-two people presented oral testimony at the hearings and ninety-one additional comments were submitted by mail.

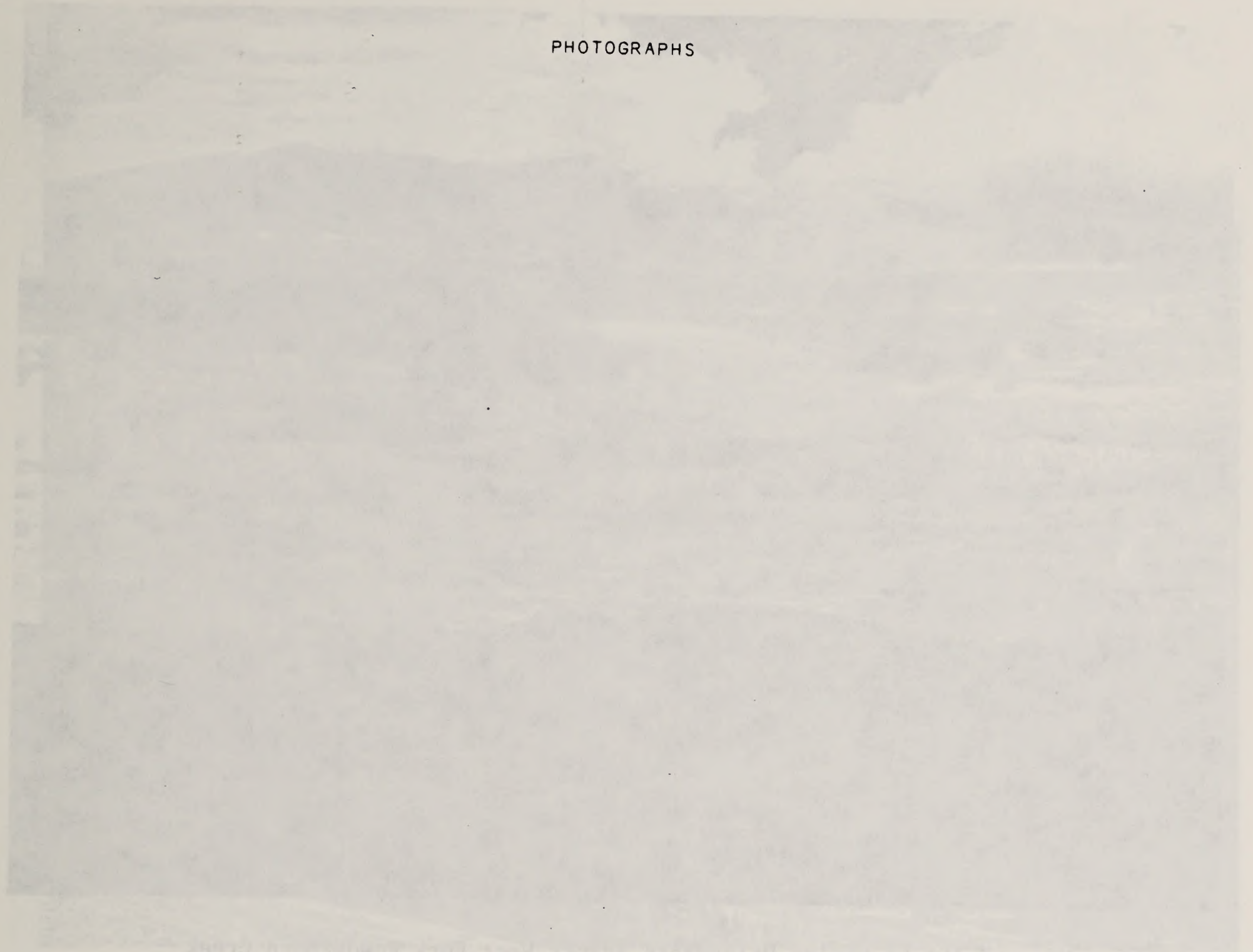
Of the total 123 written and oral communications received for the record, 86 supported the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) proposed recommendation for designation for only the existing 40,480 acre Primitive Area, 12 favored the Use Alternative under which no land would be designated as wilderness, 17 were opposed to wilderness in general without favoring a particular alternative; and seven took no position. Additionally, no one favored either the No Action Alternative or the alternative for designating a 48,500 acre wilderness.

Those supporting the BLM's proposed recommendation believed inclusion of the Powderhorn in the National Wilderness Preservation System would best preserve these alpine lands for present and future generations. Some specific reasons given by those in support of wilderness designation of the Powderhorn were: Inclusion would preserve a highly scenic area with outstanding opportunities for high-altitude hiking and peaceful solitude; the whole Cannibal-Powderhorn alpine plateau system may be large enough to be a self-sufficient, integrated evolutionary area; the designation of this area as wilderness would be of positive benefit to our country's recreational economy.

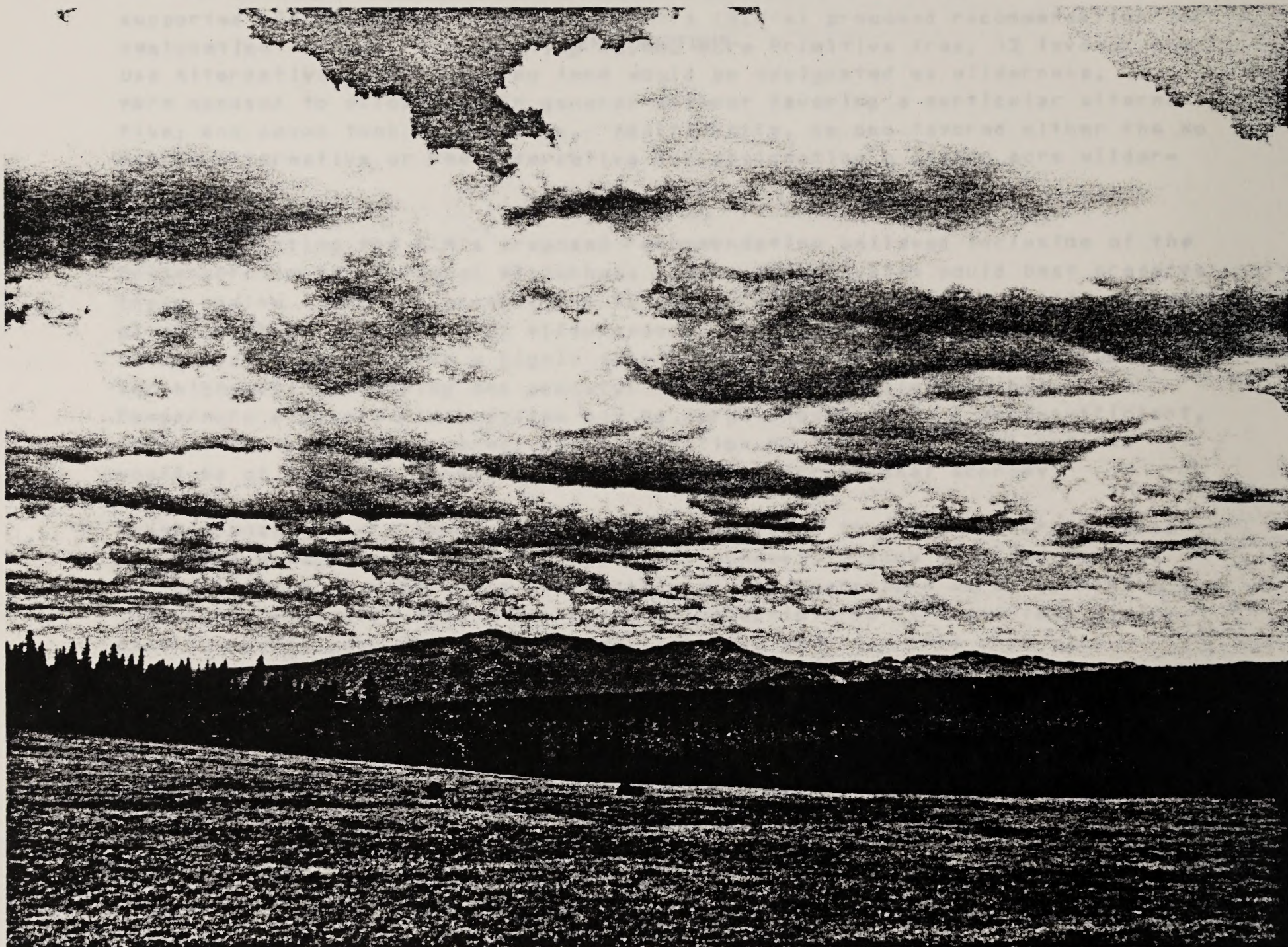
Those opposing any wilderness designation believed that the Powderhorn area should be managed under the "multiple use concept." Some specific reasons for opposition to wilderness designation of the Powderhorn were; continued insect activity will make the area more susceptible to fire and less desirable for human use; adoption of a multiple use plan for this area will provide the opportunity to explore and develop the resources contained in the area; wilderness designation might result in stringent regulations being imposed on any kind of development immediately outside wilderness boundaries.

A more specific analysis of public comments, consultation, and coordination is presented in Chapter 5 of Part 2 of the document.

PHOTOGRAPHS



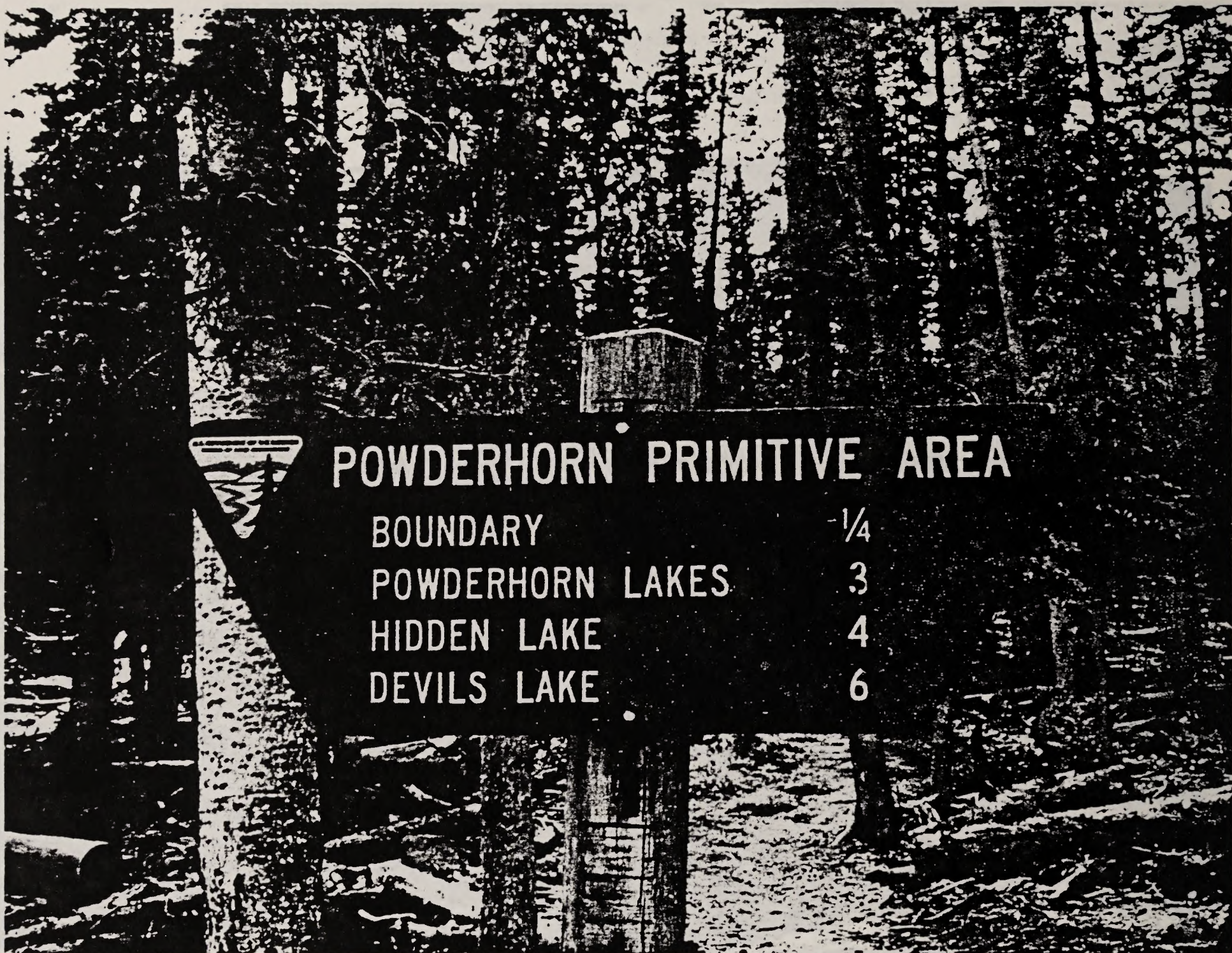
View of the La Cumbre Withermass section, West Fork Tonto River,
Tennessee (topography) and
(22 miles, N. E. 1/4, Sec. 22).



View of the La Garita Wilderness across West Fork Powderhorn Creek
from Big Meadow (T. 45N., R. 3W., Section 11).



View of Lower Powderhorn Lake and the La Garita Wilderness
to the east (T. 45N., R. 3W., Section 22).



Sign at the Indian Creek Trailhead
(T. 45N., R. 3W., Section 1).



Parking lot for the Indian Creek Trailhead
(T. 45N., R. 3W., Section 1).



View of nearby Uncompahgre Peak (Uncompahgre National Forest)
from the ridge leading up to the Calf Creek Plateau
(T. 45N., R. 3W., Section 15).



View from the Calf Creek Plateau looking east
towards the La Garita Wilderness Area
(T. 45N., R. 3W., Section 27).



Phelp's Cabin, located in Phelp's Cabin Park,
may be considered part of the historical value
of the Powderhorn (T. 45N., R. 2W., Section 20).



View of the Skull Park area heavily vegetated in willows
(T. 45N., R. 2W., Section 31).

WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

After designation of the Powderhorn as wilderness, a wilderness management plan will be developed. In preparation for this management plan, additional resource data will be collected regarding recreational use distribution, present patterns and future needs. The overriding goal of wilderness management will be to protect and perpetuate the wilderness resource.

The wilderness management plan will be amended from time to time to respond to changing ecological or sociological conditions, and to reflect new findings in the field of wilderness management.

Wilderness areas in the Colorado Rockies are heavily recreation use-oriented in the summer months. Much of this is due to weather extremes, steep topography, high elevation, and, in the winter months, avalanche danger. The Powderhorn Instant Study Area, which contains several expanses of flat to moderate terrain, offers outstanding winter recreational opportunities in the form of ski touring, ski mountaineering, snowshoeing, and winter camping.

The Powderhorn Instant Study Area can also be considered to be an integral part of a wilderness "cluster" in Southwestern Colorado. By being managed under the National Wilderness Preservation System, the Powderhorn area would serve as a link in a circle of wilderness which would include the Lizard Head, Mt. Sneffels, Big Blue, La Garita, and Weminuche Wilderness Areas.

Manageability of the Powderhorn Instant Wilderness Study Area is enhanced by the contiguous U.S. Forest Service RARE II Area, Cannibal Plateau. This RARE II area contains 31,990 acres. The combination of the two areas would create a relatively large, unconfined area, allowing diverse primitive recreational uses, and enhancement of outstanding opportunities for solitude. Present and future use pressures are not anticipated to be heavy, as compared with the Rawah Wilderness near Rocky Mountain National Park, or the Maroon Bells/Snowmass Wilderness near Aspen, Colorado. The Powderhorn Instant Study Area has limited access to some extent through adjacent non-public lands, and its location is not near any large population centers or epicenters of recreational activity. Manageability is further enhanced by the alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems which are included within the proposed boundaries. This would aid in protection of habitat for wildlife and other wilderness resource values.

The Interior Board of Land Appeals has ruled that split estate land, where the surface is administered by the Federal government and the subsurface is privately or state owned, cannot be managed as wilderness. In the case of the Powderhorn Primitive Area, 1,920 acres of split estate land is recommended as nonsuitable for designation as wilderness and will not be managed as such as long as the subsurface mineral estate is not in Federal ownership. The remainder of the area recommended suitable for wilderness designation has been determined to be manageable as wilderness.

In accordance with Section 603(c) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, once an area has been designated for preservation as Wilderness by Congress, "the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964 which apply to National Forest wilderness areas, shall apply with respect to the administration and use of such designated area, including mineral surveys required by Section 4(d)(2) of the Wilderness Act, and mineral development, access, exchange of lands, and ingress and egress for mining claimants and occupants." In addition, upon designation as Wilderness, the Powderhorn Instant Study Area would be administered under the BLM's "Wilderness Management Policy" (September 1981).

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACTS

The proposed wilderness designation would not significantly impact economic or social conditions or values.

Social Impacts

Use of the Powderhorn presently is primarily primitive recreation: hunting, fishing, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, photography and nature study. The area is also utilized for cattle and sheep grazing, and scientific and educational study, all of which would continue under wilderness designation.

Economic Impacts

The majority of the public land proposed for wilderness designation is presently managed by the Bureau as a primitive area. Under primitive area status, the cutting of live or dead standing trees is prohibited with the exception of use for fence construction, fire suppression, or for visitor health and safety along trails. Thus, wilderness designation would be no change from the present primitive area status as both designations prohibit commercial timber harvesting.

The only economic impact regarding the commercial forest resources would be those areas in those lands contiguous (4,471 acres) with the Powderhorn ISA proposed for wilderness designation.

Of these 4,471 acres, 2,220 acres have been classified as forested. This includes stands of Douglas fir and Englemann spruce. Approximately 1,120 acres of the 2,220 acres could be intensively managed. The managed acres could yield 47,000 board feet per year or 470,000 board feet per decade. This would result in a yearly economic loss of approximately \$16,000 (lumber selling value) or \$1,800 (stumpage value - \$40 per MBF) 1/.

1/ In 1980, the BLM sold approximately one million board feet of timber on High Mesa, an area northwest of the Powderhorn for \$41 per MBF.

Visitor usage may increase slightly over past use with the designation of the Powderhorn as a wilderness area. However, a more direct cause of increased visitor usage could occur as a result of publicity through trail guides, magazine articles, or through controversy during the designation process. The visitor use increases are anticipated to parallel the national growth rate of wildland use in general.

In 1972, during the Cebolla-Powderhorn MFP process, over 85 percent of the public comments favored establishment of the Powderhorn Primitive Area. During the U.S. Forest Service RARE II process, the State of Colorado received strong pro-wilderness support, although local anti-wilderness sentiment was recorded. While public comment is an important consideration regarding the supply and demand of wilderness, other resource supply and demands must be assessed to compare relative values. In the Powderhorn, there are no other resource demands which are higher nor regional supplies which are lower. Since other resource "needs" are at the same level or lower, regarding the opportunities to be found within the Powderhorn, the concept of supply and demand does not play a deciding factor in a suitability recommendation. Important considerations are the primitive recreational opportunities and qualities the Powderhorn contains, which other nearby wilderness or proposed wilderness areas may not contain.

Long-Term and Short-Term Effects of the Recommendation

Wilderness designation of the Powderhorn Primitive Area and adjacent recommended lands would continue to preserve and protect those lands containing wilderness characteristics in both the long and short term.

Designation would have an adverse impact on the timber resource by preventing commercial timber harvest of an additional 1,120 acres of land identified in the previous section (Economic and Social Impacts). Uses incompatible with the purposes of designation as wilderness are commercial timber harvesting and motorized recreation. These uses are presently prohibited within the Powderhorn Primitive Area.

Options Foregone

The U. S. Bureau of Mines and U.S. Geological Survey have conducted mineral surveys in the Powderhorn. Some small traces of thorium, titanium and manganese were found, but all sites are outside the area proposed for wilderness designation. No mineral resources of economic value were found within the boundaries of the Powderhorn (Appendix C).

As previously stated, 47,000 board feet per year would be removed from timber harvest in 1,120 of the 4,471 acres contiguous to the Powderhorn Instant Study Area.

Under present management of the primitive area, motorized vehicle use is prohibited. This restriction would continue should the area be designated as wilderness by Congress.

Regional Analysis

The Powderhorn lies within the northern extremity of the San Juan Mountains in the region known as Southwest Colorado (see Map 1). The region's economy is based primarily upon ranching, farming, mining and recreation.

The largest population centers in Southwest Colorado are:

<u>Town</u>	<u>1970 Population</u>	<u>1980 Population (estimate)</u>
Durango	10,333	10,450
Montrose	6,496	8,668
Cortez	6,032	7,004
Gunnison	4,613	5,780
Delta	3,694	3,925

The population of the Southwest Colorado region in 1970 is estimated at 87,000 residents. As of 1980, there is an estimated 100,000 residents within this region. The majority of residents are within a one-to-two hour driving time to a designated wilderness area. Major population centers (over 100,000 residents) are located on the East Slope (Fort Collins, Denver, Colorado Springs, and Pueblo). Wilderness areas in Southwest Colorado are approximately one-half to a full day's drive from these population centers. Commercial airlines provide service to the communities of Montrose, Gunnison, Durango and Cortez.

There are presently nine designated wilderness areas and a portion of three designated wilderness areas which are formed within the Southwest Colorado Region. In addition, thirty areas within this region are under study by the U.S. Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management for possible recommendation to Congress for wilderness designation (see Appendix B).

